

FREE

# Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk March 22, 2015

WEEKLY FREE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

East edition No 652

EDF ENERGY London and South of England Media Awards

## POLITICS

### Ukip hit by latest blow

Party picking up the pieces after suspension

## ROYAL

### Queen to visit next week

County set for royal day out

## SCHOOLS

### Education for Kent

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## ENVIRONMENT

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## Why the heavens should act as our wake-up call

WHEN I was young I became a bit obsessed with Hailey's Comet - a celestial body that weaves its way through the Solar System passing by the Earth around once every 76 years.

Being just 13 back in 1986, I was determined to see it. I watched all the TV programmes, bought books, posters and spent more time stood in the back garden with a pair of binoculars than the neighbours felt comfortable with. I craved a telescope - to glimpse this block of ice which had made its way through the heavens for centuries.

But for all my efforts, all I saw was the faintest of blurred smudges. And I suspect that was more down to me shaking with cold than a genuine sighting.

I say this because on Friday morning I stood in the work car park trying to watch the partial eclipse. I couldn't even see the Sun, let alone watch the Moon



Editor **Chris Britcher**

pass before it.

I felt rather deflated. Watching this sort of thing will not change my life, but being aware of the universe in which we are a mere speck and gaining an understanding of why once our ancient ancestors worshipped the stars and planets, is delivered by such a ballet in the heavens. It may not change our lives, but it reminds us of Earth's place in the Solar System.

And, what's more, they remind us that our time here is short. That some of us simply won't be here to see Hailey's Comet next time it

comes along (2061 since you ask) or that our lives will have changed so much at the next eclipse (2026).

So it's easy to not care about what happens in the skies, but it should anchor us and remind us, if nothing else, that life is worth living each and every day.

Have a great weekend and enjoy the paper.

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## Contents

### News

- 5 **Ukip hit by suspension**  
Candidate faces 'fake expenses' probe
- 6 **Queen set to tour county**  
Royal couple to visit during the week
- 8 **Cooking with Gennaro**  
Reporter Jamie Weir tastes the high life
- 11 **Pylon on the pressure**  
House prices to be hit by electricity route

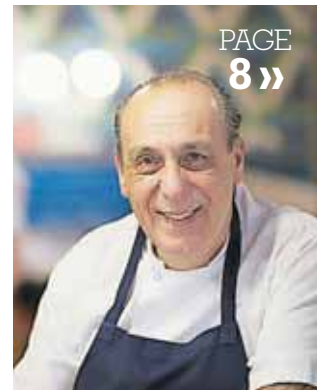
- 12 **Thumbs up for Budget?**  
Reaction to George's farewell red box
- 14 **Packing a punch**  
Are these our most influential women?
- 19 **Election countdown**  
Continuing our guide to all constituencies
- 22 **Shockwaves felt today**  
Remembering a tragedy which ripped apart a community



PAGE 6 »



PAGE 5 »



PAGE 8 »



PAGE 14 »



PAGE 22 »



PAGE 5 »



PAGE 24 »

### The Arts

- 24 **What ho Jeeves!**  
We review Wodehouse stage show at Marlowe
- 51 **Rejoicing in classic duo**  
Tribute to the timeless Simon and Garfunkel

### Food

- 57 **Our awards are back!**  
Nominate your favourites today

### Education

- 29 **Pull out guide**

### HOW TO CONTACT US...

**Publisher:** Simon Irwin  
Email [simon.irwin@archant.co.uk](mailto:simon.irwin@archant.co.uk)  
**Editor:** Chris Britcher  
Email [chris.britcher@archant.co.uk](mailto:chris.britcher@archant.co.uk)  
**Address:** Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP  
**Editorial: News:** 01233 653475  
**Sport/Leisure:** 01233 653479  
Email [editorial@kosmedia.co.uk](mailto:editorial@kosmedia.co.uk)  
**Advertising:**  
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**Distribution:** 01233 653470

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## Ukip MEP suspended in 'bogus expenses' claim

By Molly Kersey

molly.kersey@archant.co.uk

ONE of Ukip's most high profile figures – MEP and general election candidate, Janice Atkinson, has been suspended from the party amid "allegations of a serious financial nature".

In what is just the latest major blow to Ukip ahead of May's general election, Mrs Atkinson's suspension follows a report by the Sun newspaper.

It claims to have video footage of the south east MEP's chief of staff, Christine Hewitt, attempting to swell a receipt from a hotel in Margate for what it alleges was a "bogus expenses claim".

It is not known if Mrs Atkinson was aware of the situation.

The claim, it is thought, was to be made in her capacity as a Euro MP. The hotel involved is The Hoy in Margate.

Ukip leader Nigel Farage, who has seen the support for his party slow ahead of the nation going to the polls, admitted he "could do without" the latest blow to his party's credibility.

He is standing in nearby South

**SUSPENDED:** Ukip MEP Janice Atkinson is no stranger to controversy



Thanet. He is currently narrowly ahead in the polls, but has admitted should he fail to win the seat he will stand down as the party's leader.

And that, many believe, could spell the end of a party so reliant on his charisma. Mr Farage said: "I am totally astonished. If what she has been suspended for is right I am astonished she could have done something quite so stupid. I am very, very shocked and surprised.

"I want to be very clear that we do not condone, and never have condoned the types of actions that this individual is on the receiving end of allegations of. And that's why we, as a party, acted so quickly when we heard of the incident."

Mrs Atkinson, 52, was elected as MEP for the south east last year and is regularly seen by the side of Mr Farage.

She is certainly no stranger to controversy.

A former Conservative – she was the party's press officer in the south east and once unsuccessfully stood for parliament, before joining Ukip in 2011 – last year she called a British Thai constituent a "ting-tong from somewhere". Forcing her to make a public apology.

And during campaigning in Ashford, she was caught on camera swearing at anti-racism campaigners and making a rude hand gesture.

## Clouds spoil excitement of eagerly anticipated partial solar eclipse

THICK unbroken cloud turned hopes of witnessing the solar eclipse on Friday into something of a damp squib.

Excitement had been mounting for weeks about the chance to see the partial eclipse, as the Moon moved directly between Earth and the Sun, casting a shadow over parts of the globe.

But as the morning dawned, it quickly became apparent the weather would be the party pooper.

The county was covered in thick, dense cloud, leaving most without the chance of even a glimpse of the rare occurrence.

The Mid-Kent Astronomical Society set up an array of specially protected telescopes all along the beachhead at the Grain Coastal Park, on Grain, in the hope the clouds would break up in time.

But although the Met Office predicted the Sun's rays would eventually burn off the cloud, it all came too late for those hoping to watch the eclipse at around 9.30am.

However, it did go dark, and an eerie silence descended as the birds were momentarily confused by the deep change in light.

Martin Hemsley, from the South East Astronomical Society, had set up equipment at the Simon Langton School for Boys in Canterbury and was bitterly disappointed.

He told us: "I was bitterly cold too. When it all happened, it went dark, the birds seemed confused and it got very cold.

"I was glad to get home and warm up again. We had a great eclipse in 1999 and a partial a few years later, but this was awful for us in Kent this time. We got absolutely nothing – you couldn't even see the Sun in the sky."

In 1999 there was a total eclipse which was boosted by clear skies.

However, sky watchers will have plenty of time to prepare for the next solar eclipse. It is not due to take place until 2026. Here's hoping for better weather conditions then.

## Toxic smog cloud sparks health warning across county

A HEALTH warning was issued on Thursday as a "toxic smog cloud" blew across the county from the Continent.

The air quality dropped to the point health officials warned those with heart or lung conditions to avoid strenuous physical activity outdoors and warned it could spark asthma attacks.

Now Catherine Bearder, Lib Dem

MEP for the south east, is calling for new EU limits to combat air pollution. She said: "This is a reminder that air pollution doesn't respect national borders, and neither should our efforts to tackle it.

"We urgently need to put in place strict limits across Europe that will force governments to take action and improve air quality and tackle air pollution."

## Financial boost as cricket club reveals £650k profits

KENT County Cricket Club delivered some rare good news this week after turning a profit of more than £650,000 last year.

It comes in contrast to the high on £100,000 loss it suffered in 2013.

However, the club admits it may not be able to afford to sign a crowd-pleasing overseas star this year as it looks to nail down costs.

The club has invested heavily in

bringing its Beckenham ground back up to scratch while work also continues on developing its headquarters in Canterbury.

Post tax profits were £658,437 compared with last year's loss of £98,576. Chief executive Jamie Clifford said the results were "very encouraging".

For full details, turn to the sports pages.



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## A2 to be transformed into 'mini-motorway'?

THE A2 could become subject to a major multi-billion pound upgrade as part of a nationwide scheme to roll out a number of 'mini-motorways'.

According to a report in The Times on Friday, the proposals are likely to be officially announced this week in what would be one of the biggest modern day shake-ups of the road network.

It would see a host of roads including the stretch of the A2 linking London to the county, upgraded, with roundabouts and traffic lights stripped out and entrance and exit slip lanes introduced.

There are also proposals to develop a wi-fi system to "beam traffic information directly into cars" with motorways in the south east set to pilot the project.

## Queen confirms special visit to open memorial and unveil city statues

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

LESS than a week after the Duchess of Cambridge thrilled the crowds in Margate, the Queen confirmed she would be making a special visit to the county later this month.

Accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh, she will pay a visit to Capel-le-Ferne near Folkestone before heading to Canterbury on Thursday, March 26.

She will start the day by officially opening The Wing at the Battle of Britain Memorial on New Dover Road in Capel-le-Ferne, a major new information centre remembering the bravery of 'the few' – the airmen who fought in the skies above the county in 1940.

They will be greeted by Prince Michael of Kent before meeting trustees, supporters, volunteers and schoolchildren learning about the Battle of Britain in the Geoffrey Page Centre. They will be introduced to a group of surviving RAF airmen who



**VISIT:** Queen will visit next week

fought in the Battle of Britain, before viewing a flypast of a Hurricane, Spitfire and Typhoon.

She will follow in the footsteps of her mother, Queen Elizabeth the

Queen Mother, who unveiled the memorial at the same site back in July, 1993.

The new centre, which cost £2.3m to build and a further £1.2m to fit out, will open to the public for the first time next Saturday (March 28).

With the exception of a £250,000 government grant, the entire cost of The Wing has been raised by public subscription.

The royal couple will then move to Canterbury where the Queen will attend a service and unveil two statues – depicting herself and her husband – created to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. They will also meet those behind their construction.

News of the visit came just days after hundreds flocked to the Turner Contemporary in Margate to catch a glimpse of the Duchess of Cambridge during one of her final visits ahead of giving birth to her second child next month.

■ Full details and photographs of the royal visit will be in next week-end's edition of Kent on Sunday.



**CONFIRMED:** Peter Andre

## Quo joins line up for Castle Concert shows

ROCKERS Status Quo will be joined by the likes of reformed boy band Blue and Peter Andre at this summer's Castle Concerts series in the grounds of Rochester Castle.

The veteran rock band will kick off the shows on Wednesday, July 15. They will then be followed on the Thursday by a triple-header of Blue, Peter Andre and winner of last year's The Voice, Jermain Jackson.

For Lee Ryan of Blue, it will be a return to his home turf – he grew up in Chatham.

The following day will be '80s night – with Billy Ocean returning, supported by three of the original members of Bucks Fizz. BBC Radio 2 DJ Sara Cox will also be on hand to help whip up the crowd.

And, as is traditional, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra will round off the evening on the Saturday. It will feature a performance by soprano Laura Wright.

Tickets for the shows go on sale next week – starting with Status Quo on the Monday.

Medway Council's portfolio holder for community services, Howard Doe, said: "We have another great line-up and hope it will once again be a great event."

## Tourists continue to flock to the county

THE county's tourism industry is continuing to thrive with greater numbers choosing to visit destinations around the county than ever before, according to research by Visit Kent.

With thousands flocking to attractions today as part of the My Big Weekend ticket giveaway, figures released by the county's tourism champion show that in 2013, the county had 58 million visitors, with the tourist industry making a £3.4 billion contribution to Kent's economy. It was the third most visited destination in the UK, outside of London, for foreign visitors, with overseas staying trips increasing by seven per cent.

Chief executive of Visit Kent Sandra Matthews-Marsh said: "The overall rise in visitor numbers and jobs, and the strong value of tourism itself across the county is, once again, fantastic news.

"We continue to maintain a healthy stream of visitors supporting our economy, and the overseas staying visitor numbers are particularly encouraging."

## Bomb squad called after device is found

AN UNEXPLODED war time bomb caused chaos on the rail line between two busy Kent towns on Wednesday morning.

Regular mainline services and high speed trains between Folkestone and Dover were suspended for more than an hour after the discovery was made by maintenance workers at around 10am near Samphire Hoe.

Travellers were instead diverted onto replacement bus services.

Army bomb disposal experts were called to check the device, which had been found before and previously made safe.

It is believed the device dates back to the Second World War when bombs were planted along the coast to act as a defence against any possible invasion. A Southeastern spokesman said: "We were alerted to the situation and took the precaution of closing the track while work was undertaken to ensure the device was safe."

Police said they expect the device was historic.

KEA

## Your chance to be at BBC election debates

A HOST of special debates in the lead up to May's general election are to be staged by BBC Radio Kent.

The string of hustings debates will take place across the county and feature candidates in the running to be elected for some of the key seats.

And listeners have the opportunity to secure free tickets to attend.

The first of which takes place in Dartford at the end of the month.

Hosted by presenters Julia George and Ian Collins, they will be recorded for broadcast in full during the build up to polling day.

To be part of the audience for the debates, which will take place in Dartford, Medway and Thanet, you can request tickets at Election2015@bbc.co.uk.

Admittance is free of charge but these events are ticket only.

The first debate is confirmed to take place on Monday, March 30, at the Acacia Hall in Dartford.

Doors open at 6.30pm with the debate getting underway at 7.30pm.



# agenda

What will make next week's headlines...

## Your final chance to have say on pylons

A CONSULTATION into the Richborough Connection ends on Friday.

The project will take electricity pumped under the Channel from Belgium from Richborough, via a string of pylons, to a sub-station in Canterbury where it will join the National Grid. The sometimes

controversial project – turn to page 11 for full details – opened its consultation period back at the beginning of February.

Project manager Steve Self said: "I'd like to thank all of those who have come along to one of our public events and given us feedback so far. For those who haven't, time



is rapidly running out." For details of the project and how you can make your voice heard before Friday, visit the site [www.richboroughconnection.co.uk](http://www.richboroughconnection.co.uk).

## Actress returns to school to deliver special talk

ACTRESS Sheila Hancock will return to her old school on Monday to deliver a special talk looking back at her career.

The award-winning star, 82, will appear at Dartford Grammar School for Girls at 7.30pm.

She follows in the footsteps of BBC News presenter Nicholas

Owen who recently staged an evening talk at the school, looking back at this career.

A school spokesman said: "We are very excited to be able to welcome Ms Hancock back to the school."

Tickets can be purchased in advance directly from the school.

## ...also

### Meet train managers

COMMUTERS can speak directly to senior management of Southeastern on key issues on Tuesday at the latest 'meet the manager' event.

It takes place between 8am and 10am at London's St Pancras International station.

### Anti Iraq war screening

A FREE screening of We Are Many a film looking behind the scenes of the global anti-war marches in 2003 takes place at the University of Kent at Canterbury on Wednesday. It runs from 5pm to 7pm at the Woolf Lecture Theatre.

### Town plans on agenda

PLANS to transform Tonbridge High Street will be discussed at a meeting on Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council's joint transportation board on Monday.

Conclusions will be recommended to go before the borough cabinet.

### Get ready for Easter

NHS chiefs are urging everyone to ensure they are prepared for the Easter bank holiday by checking they have the medicine they need at home and by downloading the Health Help Now app to their smartphones.

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# Cooking up a treat with Jamie Oliver's inspirational mentor

Ahead of the opening of the chef's restaurant in Tunbridge Wells, we sent **Jamie Weir** to get a real taste of what's to come



JAMIE Oliver has been an inspiration to many - prompting all age groups to re-engage with cooking for the flavours and nutritional benefits.

But while the superstar chef is today a multi-millionaire with a legion of fans, he owes much of his success to one of the key figures who inspired him.

Enter Gennaro Contaldo, a 66-year-old Italian chef and restaurateur. Best known for appearing in the *Two Greedy Italians* BBC TV show, alongside business partner Antonio Carluccio, he is also well known for popping up alongside Jamie Oliver on TV specials too.

He first met the 'Naked Chef' when Mr Oliver worked under him at the Neal Street Restaurant in London. The pair formed a close bond, becoming good friends, and also business partners.

And, as a consequence, as Jamie Oliver prepares to open his latest business venture - another of his self named restaurants this time in the High Street at the bottom end of Tunbridge Wells, close to the Pantiles - it is Mr Contaldo he sends to whip up a little pre-opening publicity.

Which is how I find myself, apron on, face-to-face with the amiable chef inside Jamie's Italian Trattoria.

He is convinced with the right ingredients and a desire to create, anyone can work magic in the kitchen.

"I started in the kitchen when I was just 10," he says in his thick Italian accent, "and Jamie Oliver - he was born in the kitchen. His parents had a pub, and he'd go into the kitchen and watch, learn, pick little bits up almost as soon as he was born.

"But you don't have to start at a really early age; that helps, because it gets you familiar with everything,

but if a person has that love of food, and drive to cook, they'll be able to pick it up in time.

"It's about making the most of the simple flavours you have. It's about elevating the ordinary. That's something anyone can do, if they are willing to work at it."

The restaurant has created employment for close to 40 people, and Mr Contaldo has worked alongside all the staff as they prepare for Monday's grand opening.

"Cooking is just about making the most of the ingredients you have," he adds. "You don't need to spend huge sums of money; you just need to take time and care with the food, and apply yourself. If you want to be a chef, and cook great food, you can. Anyone can."

And so he set to prove a point by guiding me through the creation of some dishes - demonstrating first

hand how confidence can allow delicious meals to be created simply and swiftly. At least, it looked simple and swift when he did it.

First up - fresh tomato sauce with garlic, basil and pasta.

He explained: "It's one of these really simple dishes that's just about getting great ingredients, and using them in a pretty simple way to make something beautiful.

"It costs hardly anything as well; it's perfect for families on a tight budget, as you don't need lots of ingredients, and because it's really quick, you don't need much time."

For those who've never been in a working restaurant kitchen during a lunchtime service, it's not for the faint hearted.

To prepare the staff, friends and family were being waited on to get the ebb and flow of taking and fulfilling orders to the right level before its

official opening.

Organised chaos may be an accurate description, but that does a disservice to the chefs, as everything which is done, is conducted in a controlled way. It's just fast-paced, with quick, efficient movements, and an immense level of organisation.

For Mr Contaldo, he's used to it. Just last year, he created a Guinness World Record for making the most fresh ravioli in a blink-and-you'll-miss-it two minutes flat.

"In the kitchen, everything you do is fast, but with care," he explained. "How are your knife skills?" he asked, before getting me to roughly chop the ingredients.

"This kind of food isn't about chopping perfectly, or presenting it like a picture. It's all about the flavour."

As he chats, he heats olive oil in a pan, before dropping the prepped ingredients in to cook together. After

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**TASTY:** Our reporter Jamie Weir (left) with Gennaro Contaldo



letting it all sizzle for what seemed a fairly short time, a lid was placed on the pan, and the flavours were allowed time to blend.

"Olive oil is a key part of all of our dishes," he says. "We use only the fin-

est oil, which is healthy as well. Italy produces incredible oil, and even though it's not cheap, it makes such a big difference to the cooking that we have to get it."

With the sauce reaching the point

of pouring and pasta freshly prepared, the meal was served up.

It looked good enough to eat. Not something you could always say about my cooking.

"See, it's not so difficult to cook, is

it?" he said, "and you can make really beautiful, fresh food quickly and simply. That's what I love about these flavours, and that's what Jamie loves about them too. We're always looking to make something special when-

ever we're in the kitchen, just like you've made something special there."

Jamie's Trattoria in Tunbridge Wells High Street opens on Monday, March 23.



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# Property expert fears big drop in house prices due to pylons

The National Grid's plan for 62 huge towers carrying power from Richborough to Canterbury has met strong opposition and now concerns are growing nearby homes could be blighted writes **Jamie Weir**...

**H**OME owners living near the new Richborough Connection could see the value of their property plummet by up to 10 per cent, if a 62-pylon strong route is built, according to a local estate agent.

The warning from Hobbs Parker comes as National Grid gears up to end its final consultation into the new line of pylons, which will cut a swathe through the east of the county, running from Richborough near Sandwich, all the way to Canterbury.

The 20 kilometres of pylons will run close to Upstreet, Hersden, Chislet, Broad Oak and Sturry.

The pylons are needed, says the National Grid, to help bring ashore a new power supply from Belgium to the UK. Travelling under the sea via what is known as the Nemo link, it is designed to ensure back-up to our own power supplies.

It flows into a site in Richborough before the pylons transport it to the sub-station in Canterbury and into the National Grid.

But it will come, claim estate agent Hobbs Parker, at a high price.

It says that the new line could adversely affect property owners in the area.

The business's head of county houses, Alex Davies, told KoS that he has seen sales fall through as a result of pylons in the past.

He said: "We had one example of a buyer withdrawing from a sale because of the buzzing from pylons in wet conditions. And those pylons weren't terribly close, they were a good field away from the houses, but the noise was just too much for them."

"The sight of them can also be off-putting for potential buyers, especially in rural areas, as obviously they spoil the view."

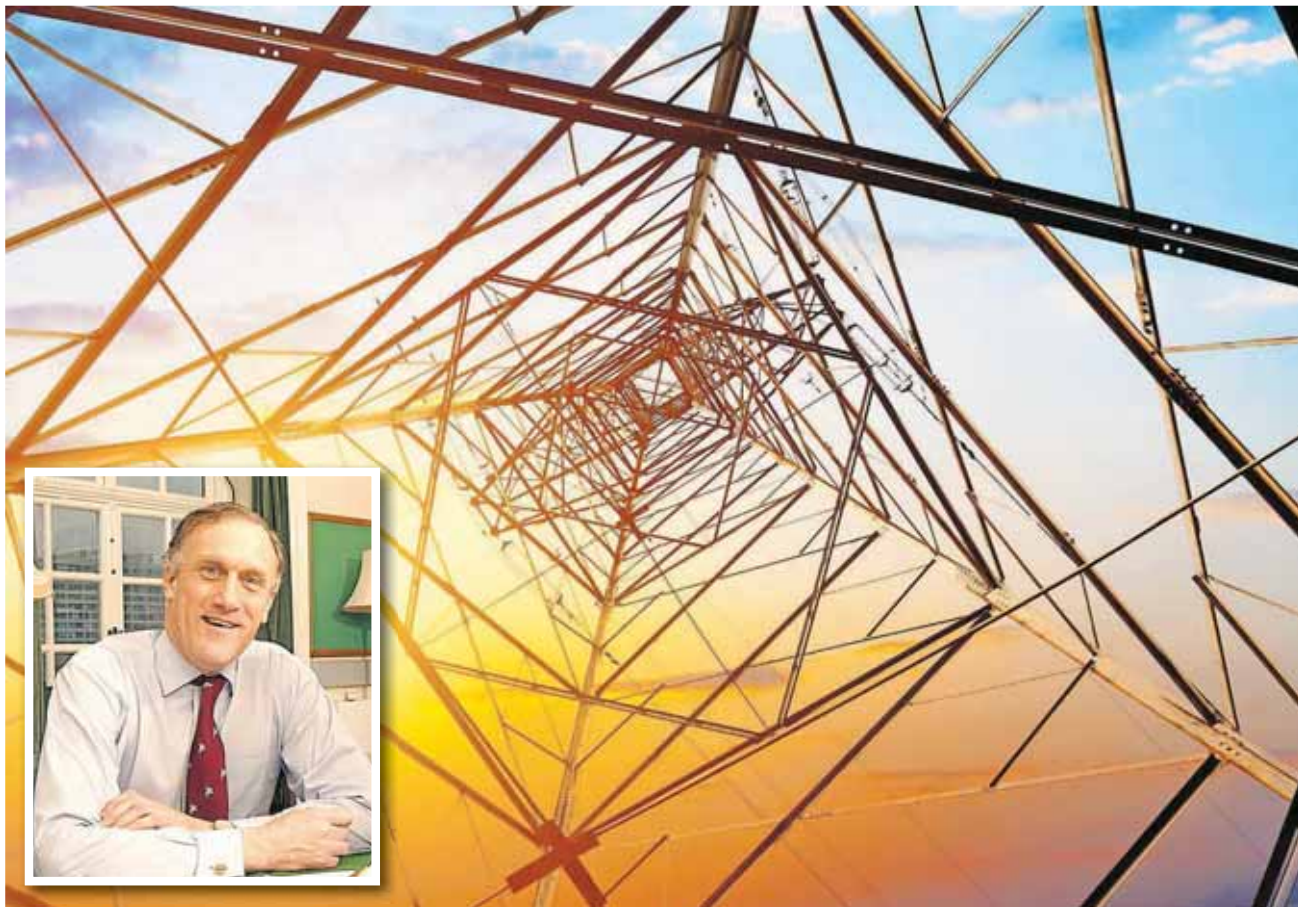
"It's possible that it could have an impact of up to a 10 per cent reduction in property prices for homes which are directly affected."

It's unlikely, however, many of the properties will see such a dramatic reduction in prices though, with Mr Davies making it clear that kind of loss would only be incurred if a property was directly affected, with a pylon running through its boundary.

Sam Smart, an expert in compensation on property blight at the estate agency, says that recompense for affected homeowners is unlikely too, even if people do find it a struggle to shift their homes because of the new pylons.

The impact on views, which will discourage many potential homebuyers, is something that rural campaign group the Campaign to Protect Rural England has sought to mitigate against.

The Canterbury chairman for the group, Barrie Gore, says that more care should be given to the country-



**SHOCKING:** MP Julian Brazier says he cannot support the project in its current state.

side. He told KoS the pylons would be an eyesore, and one which wasn't needed.

He said: "We strongly oppose the proposal to connect any of this supply above ground, and the costs of putting the cables underground are far less than National Grid has estimated. In at least two other European countries, and also in our own National Parks and open spaces elsewhere, the cables have been put underground."

"The pylons proposed will either be of traditional type, though much higher at 160 feet than the present ones, or a more modern type of a T-post construction which are still enormous at 135 feet tall. Either type will be highly visible from viewpoints over and around Canterbury."

"If National Grid can use underground cables elsewhere, they can do so in Canterbury and save Den Grove Wood in Sturry and many other attractive open spaces along the route from a visual blight."

"We made these points to National Grid back in 2013, but they prefer to ignore them."

Mr Gore also took aim at the

project which necessitated the new row of pylons – the Nemo undersea link which brings power from Belgium.

He said: "The public has never been consulted about the decision to bring the link ashore from Europe, and there are in our view better places to have put it."

MP for Canterbury, Julian Brazier, has also said the project might impact on a new reservoir which is being proposed near to Broad Oak.

The reservoir is part of South East Water's plans to secure future water supply in the future.

Mr Brazier said: "We have a few options in providing energy, but South East Water can only build their reservoir on one location."

"A clear solution to this would be to bury the line near Broad Oak. This will also remove high pylons hanging over the local community. National Grid have thus far resisted this because of cost and because it is not an area of outstanding beauty."

"I want to see both projects delivered successfully to ensure the future water and electricity needs of Canterbury and Whitstable are met. At

present however, this isn't happening. I will continue to press National Grid on this to get a better deal."

National Grid, however, said that it felt the planned route would have little impact on the reservoir, stating that it had consulted South East Water, and taken its feedback on board.

A spokesman told KoS: "We believe that the proposed route we are consulting on strikes the right balance between the impact on the environment, the residents of Broad Oak, and the proposed South East Water reservoir."

"We're continuing to work with South East Water to ensure that both projects can proceed successfully."

The MP said that although he was supportive of the project, he would be pushing National Grid to make compromises.

He said: "I understand the principle of this project. Kent will need a secure supply of electricity for the future and this provides a flexible solution. Yet, compromises must be made and I cannot support the project in its current state."

"I have always pressed for the smaller 'T shaped' pylons that are

less ugly. These pylons will not blight the skyline of one of Britain's most iconic buildings, Canterbury Cathedral, and will limit the aesthetic damage to the countryside that villages like Sturry will have to endure."

National Grid said that it would not be able to compensate people for any loss to their property's value, adding that there could be no certainty that pylons would lead to any blight.

A National Grid spokesman told KoS: "We always aim to maximise the distance between a proposed line and any properties wherever we can."

"Given that the costs are borne by everyone through their bills, in common with other developers of networks that stretch across the country we think the right approach is to pay people whose land is crossed by our network, for instance where lines travel over someone's land or where pylons are built, but not make wider payments."

"Our focus is on reducing the impact of our connections and we try to do this through careful routing and other mitigation measures where appropriate."



# Do George's sums all add up in final push for votes?

There was good and bad news for business in the final Budget before May's general election. Jamie Weir gauges reaction...

**D**ESPITE the chancellor George Osborne's predictions of a Budget with "no giveaways, no gimmicks" few believed he wouldn't be acutely mindful of a general election just around the corner.

After all, the populace are always attentive to a little pre-polling day incentives.

And amid the stalling of fuel price hikes and a cut (albeit modest) in the price of beer, there was plenty of positives which could deliver some genuine economic benefits to the county.

Boosting the economic success in Kent – a powerhouse in the country's economy – was always likely to be a clear priority for the chancellor.

One big announcement was for additional support for businesses in the east of the county, with a likely extension to the Discovery Park Enterprise Zone, which would see it stretch across two new sites at Betteshanger and Manston Airport – that could create an extra 1,000 jobs.

It brings with it a host of benefits for companies; business rate discounts, simplified planning processes and super-fast broadband.

In launching the proposed extension, Mr Osborne said the scheme would help to deliver jobs and growth.

He said: "This Budget is one more step on the road from austerity to prosperity, and builds on our vision of a truly national recovery. Our long term economic plan is already helping to deliver jobs and growth in the south east, and this Budget announced plans for even more investment across the region.

"Our proposals include extending the Discovery Park Enterprise Zone

and delivering 4,000 more homes on brownfield sites."

Local growth minister Penny Mor-daunt said that Enterprise Zones were driving the economy forward, creating jobs and attracting investment.

She said: "Extending the programme as part of our long-term economic plan means we can build on that success, allowing hundreds more companies to benefit from the top-class business incentives and world-class infrastructure that these thriving business hubs offer.

"It will mean thousands more jobs for hard-working people and a real boost to local business."

Despite his promise to ignore gimmicks, the chancellor did find the cash to give the brewers and wineries a boost, and bring cheer to drinkers, with one penny off the price of a pint, and a further freeze on duty for wine.

But that, according to Staplehurst's Hush Heath Vineyard was not enough.

Owner of the winery, Richard Balfour-Lynn, said the chancellor should have made it clear that English wineries – many of which are located in Kent – were supported by the government.

He told KoS: "I'm really disappointed that he has not supported our industry across the country.

"I believe that there should have been a cut on duty for English wine producers. It's a young industry, and it needs Government help to really grow.

"It provides jobs, money in the local economy and the real prospect of significant growth, so there should

have been a cut to help us be more competitive with European producers."

Mr Osborne also announced that £41 million cash promised to flooding relief schemes in the south east at the 2014 Autumn Statement, will also be poured in sooner, saying "because we chose to stick with a plan that delivers we are now able to make that investment".

That is something which Canterbury MP, Julian Brazier was pleased to hear, with flooding defences between Ashford and Fordwich, in his constituency, set to get the cash faster.

Mr Brazier said: "The money to-

wards flood defences is very welcome.

"I look forward to seeing the difference this will make in holding back the River Stour from ruining local homes and businesses."

Flood cash isn't the only thing set to benefit local businesses though.

Bill Fox, the chairman of the Kent branch of the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) – a group which lobbies government on business issues – said the Budget would provide the county's small businesses with a boost.

One of the FSB's long-standing campaigns has been to get Government to review business rates – some-

thing which Mr Fox said, if done properly, would deliver real benefits to Kent's small businesses.

He said: "Our members will be encouraged by some of the announcements. The review into business rates is long overdue. When complete, it must deliver tangible benefits to businesses and not end up as just another report that sits on the shelf.

"The commitment to raise the annual investment allowance to an appropriate level will provide the certainty needed for businesses to plan and invest – something badly needed if the UK is to raise its productivity."

## £1M FOR BIGGIN HILL'S BATTLE OF BRITAIN CHAPEL

GEORGE Osborne's announcement of £1m for St George's RAF Chapel of Remembrance at Biggin Hill could pave the way for a museum at the site.

As recently as December, the future of the chapel was under threat when the Ministry of Defence announced it was to stop funding it – in January, Biggin Hill Airport stepped in and offered to cover the memorial's running costs.

Coinciding with the 75th anniversary year of the Battle of Britain, the chancellor pledged the cash in his last Budget before the general election saying he was going to make sure future generations are aware of Biggin Hill's historical significance.

Biggin Hill is best-known for its role during the summer and autumn of 1940 in the Second

World War, when it served as one of the main fighter bases protecting London and the south east from attack by enemy bombers.

And the chancellor's cash boost has been welcomed by Bromley Council, which says it has been in discussions with the Government about the long-term future of the chapel and the possibility of a new museum at the site.

The council hopes "a museum would act as a memorial and tribute to remind future generations about the sacrifices made by airmen and ground crew at Biggin Hill in the war, particularly during the Battle of Britain".

Council leader Stephen Carr said: "We are very pleased by this news and will continue to work with RAF, the church and other stakeholders to ensure that the sacrifices made for all of us at



Biggin Hill are never forgotten.

"Whilst we await the details, the long-held aspiration of a museum has nevertheless moved forwards today. There is much work to be done, including launching a fundraising campaign, and with the help of the nation, we are absolutely determined to make this happen."





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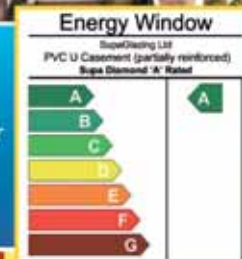
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# Most influential women in Kent?

As the battle to ensure female representation in the most senior positions continues, **Molly Kersey** ponders if these are the county's most influential...

**A**s the debate rages over equality in the work place and the topic once again becomes a political football during the run up to the general election, the focus once again falls on the role of women in our society.

And for Kent, the role call of women in positions of power should not be underestimated.

From overseeing the budgets of our police force, to spearheading some of the most influential organisations that help generate millions for our economy, or capturing the imagination of the nation with their achievements, they play a highly significant role.

We take a look at 11 of the most inspiration women in the county and why they make the list...



### ANN BARNES

Love her or hate her, it would be wrong to discount the considerable power and influence which Ann Barnes wields over our law enforcers.

What's more, she has played an active and influential role in the county for several decades.

She served as a school teacher for nearly 30 years in Merseyside and in Kent, and in the late 1980s served as a magistrate.

But it was in 2001 when she became an independent member of the Kent Police Authority she began a long association with the force.

The authority was the forerunner of the police and crime commissioner office which she subsequently was elected to hold, and from 2005 until its dissolution, served as its chairman.

Despite vocally opposing the creation of the role, she would end up winning the public vote in every constituency in Kent in 2012.

She may have made some glaring media gaffes which it is hard to imagine will not cost her at the next election, but she has been a woman at the summit of a very male-orientated world, and delivering plenty of benefits - such as reinforcing victim services.



### AMANDA COTTRELL

There are a select group of individuals who seem to have been at the county's top table, influencing our direction and progress over the years.

And Amanda Cottrell has been at its very heart - a role underlined in 2011 when she was awarded an OBE in recognition of her extensive services to the county.

To name but a few, she was previously chairman of tourist champion Visit Kent, a Kent ambassador and trustee of Canterbury Cathedral and a vice president of the Canterbury Festival and Maidstone Museum.

She was a magistrate for more than 20 years and was High Sheriff of Kent from 2006 to 2007. She holds an honorary fellowship of Canterbury Christchurch University and an honorary doctorate of civil law from the University of Kent.

She has also been a school governor and the county president of the Kent Girl Guides.

And the list goes on...



### JO JAMES

For nearly 25 years, Jo James has been one of the most influential figures in the county's business world, and is today chief executive of the Kent



Invicta Chamber of Commerce - supporting and promoting the county's business leaders big and small.

She is in charge of making sure that the chamber meets the needs of its members and maintains its good financial footing.

The membership organisation aims to provide business support services. These include networking, representation and international trade, helping to build an environment that helps business growth.

As one of the largest and most active chambers in the south east, it has been an undoubted success.



#### TRACEY EMIN

A Turner Prize-winning artist, who has been as controversial over the years as she has acclaimed.

Born and bred in Margate, she continues to hold her Kent heritage close to her chest - making regular visits to the town and citing it frequently as a key influence on her life.

She's not always had an easy life as some of her work is a nod towards, but she has been, and remains, hugely influential to generations of young talent.

As one of the pioneers of the so-called Young British Artists movement in the mid 1990s, she remains as relevant today, as she ever has been.



#### HELEN GRANT

As the minister for sport and tourism, Helen Grant has enjoyed a meteoric rise since first being elected in 2010.

The current MP for Maidstone and the Weald and mother of two children, Helen Grant certainly leads a busy life.

She grew up in a single parent family after her parents separated and her father emigrated to America, and previously said that during her childhood she had been subjected to racist bullying.

But despite difficulties, her impressive career flourished.

It saw her establish Grant Solicitors in 1996, which has a specific focus on the problems of family breakdowns.

She served on the justice select committee until she was appointed to the Conservative justice policy social group in 2006. She wrote extensively on family policy after joining Iain Duncan Smith's think tank - the Centre for Social Justice.

Her election as MP in 2010 made her the Conservatives' first black MP, and her elevation through the ranks is a testament to her determination.

#### IRIS JOHNSTON

Being leader of Thanet District Council is never an easy task. As the council overseeing some of the county's most deprived areas, it brings with it challenges unique to the island.

It is also one of the rare Labour-led councils in the county with a political make-up which puts the Tories and Labour neck-a-neck. Politically, therefore, it is on a perpetual knife edge.

So when Clive Hart stepped down last year, veteran Labour councillor Iris Johnston took over just as one of the most contentious issues in Thanet was causing chaos - the closure of Manston Airport.

She has demonstrated strong, steady leadership since, and in becoming leader became Kent's only female council leader and the first to lead Thanet council.



#### KELLY HOLMES

For years, athlete Kelly Holmes was the nearly girl - coming so close to triumph, but so often narrowly missing out or falling victim to injury.

That, however, was to all change in 2004 at the Athens Olympic Games. Not only did she triumph first in the 800m, but she then completed a golden double in the 1,500m too. Her haul elevated her to the status of the most successful mid-distance runner in British athletic history.

Her success, and subsequent crowning as BBC Sport Personality of the Year and being made a dame, has ensured she remains a hugely positive role model for a generation.

Born in Hildenborough, she continues to hold the area close to her heart, having recently opened a cafe in the town.

Continues on page 16

**BATTLE:** Iris Johnston in fight for Manston



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#### TRACEY CROUCH

After wrestling the seat of Chatham and Aylesford from Labour at the 2010 election, Tracey Crouch has gone on to become a popular and effective local MP for the Conservative Party.

Having grown up in the county, she is a more moderate voice on the Right and seems destined to hold the seat come May's general election.

A qualified FA coach, she continues to manage a youth girls' football team in addition to her duties at Westminster.

Her background before becoming an MP saw her spend two years in Parliament working for MPs including Michael Howard before working as a political consultant. In 2003, she returned to become the chief of staff to the shadow education secretary Damian Green, before carrying out the same role for the shadow home secretary David Davis.

#### VICTORIA POMERY

Talk about the regeneration of Margate, and within seconds the words Turner Contemporary will be raised.

Never under-estimate its role as a key – perhaps the key – cog in the regeneration of the seaside town which has fallen on tough times.

Victoria Pomery was appointed director of the project back in 2002 – some nine years before it opened to welcome its first visitors.

She has played a key role in positioning the gallery as not only a major attraction with a string of crowd-pulling, challenging exhibitions, but also in its role of boosting the town's economic recovery.

She is a board member of Strange Cargo in Folkestone and is a member of Arts Council England and South East Visual Arts Group.

#### SANDRA MATTHEWS-MARSH

As chief executive of Visit Kent, the organisation responsible for supporting and championing the county's tourism industry, Sandra Matthews-Marsh has become almost synonymous with the business sector.

Personable and strong, she has held the post for the last 10 years, leading the public/private sector partnership in a bid to drive up visitor numbers and coach businesses to cash in on the opportunities.

She was awarded an MBE for her services to tourism which brings some

**PALACE:** Sandra Matthews-Marsh collects her MBE



£3.2bn to the Kent economy and supported over 63,000 jobs.

#### LIZZY YARNOLD

Winter sports were something we never took very seriously, given the county's normally mild temperatures and once a year snowfall. But that was until Lizzy Yarnold arrived on the scene.

Her victory in the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia, propelled her name – and her sport, skeleton, into the public consciousness.

She underlined what a woman with raw talent and a determination to succeed could achieve. What's more, she remembered her roots, returning to

her West Kingsdown home in style following her success.

She has gone on to remain in the spotlight with World Cup, World Championship and European Championship titles.

■ **What do you think? Have we missed some key people out? And who do you think is worthy of the title of most influential female in Kent?**

Let us know by writing to: The Editor, KoS, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP. Or email [editorial@kosmedia.co.uk](mailto:editorial@kosmedia.co.uk)

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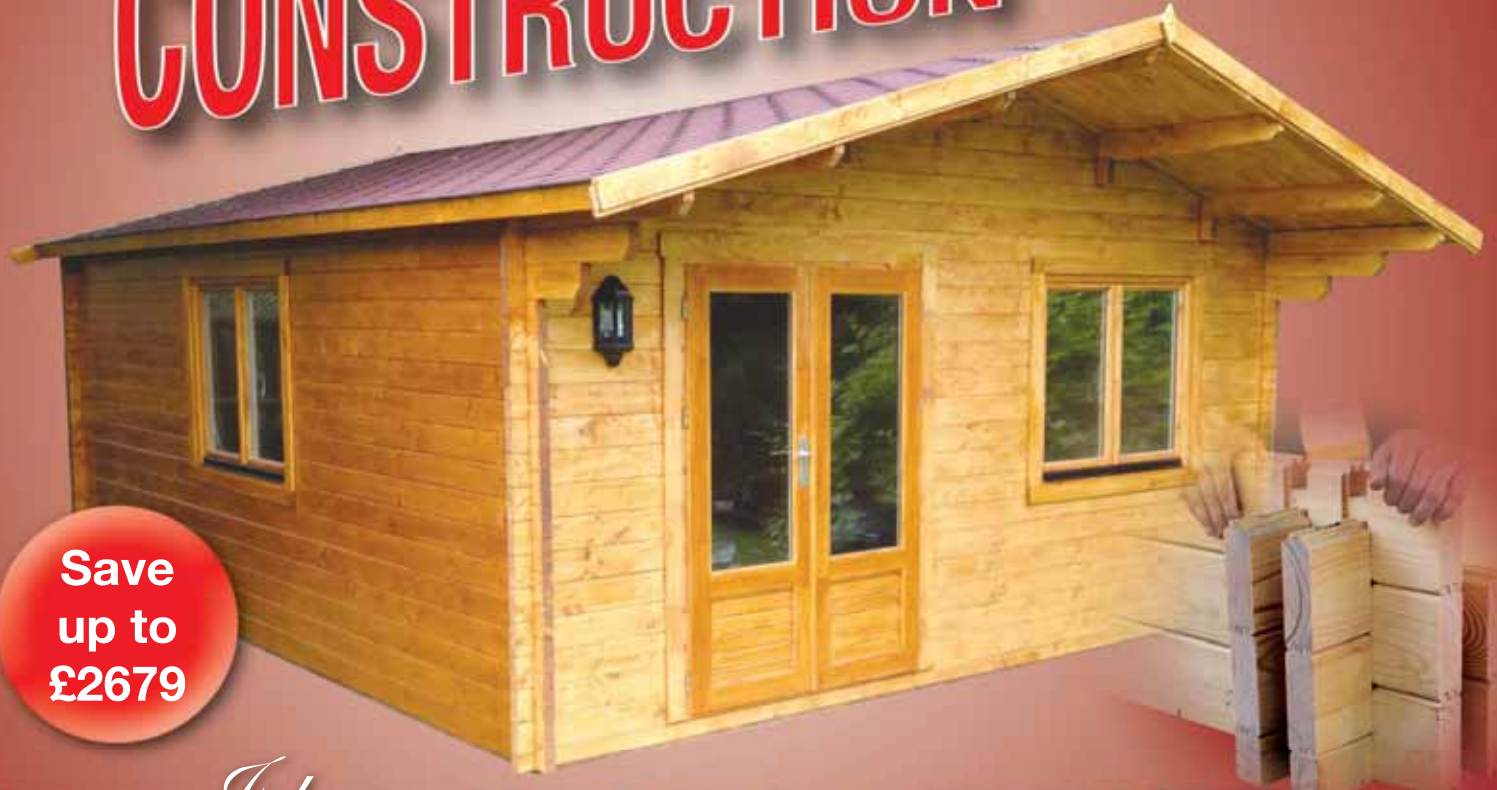
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## CANDIDATES

### Full list of confirmed candidates:

Gordon Henderson (Con)  
**Gary Miller (Green)**  
 Keith Nevols (Lib Dem)  
**Guy Nicholson (Lab)**  
 Richard Palmer (Ukip)

**REGENERATION:** Plans have been approved for town centre

# Could Ukip banana skin slip up Gordon?

**Sarah Linney** continues our look at all Kent constituencies

**F**OR a constituency so young – at just under 18 years old, it isn't even old enough to vote – Sittingbourne and Sheppey has packed a lot into its life so far.

Its MP from 1997, Labour's Derek Wyatt, clung on with one of the smallest majorities in the country in 2005, winning by just 79 votes – and in 2010 Conservative Gordon Henderson defeated him with a resounding 12,383 majority.

Ukip then tried to poach Mr Henderson for their own – but he refused to go, saying he is more interested in representing his constituents than in party politics.

He was left less than delighted to hear he would then be facing a Ukip candidate as he sought re-election.

It's hard to imagine him not being returned to Westminster... but stranger things have happened.

Certainly his record in the House of Commons bears out his claim to stand up for what he believes rather than toe the party line – he has voted against the government on around 50 occasions, opposing the bedroom tax, gay marriage and the bombing of Iraq.

And he says he has worked hard for the constituency, too, working with businesses to create more jobs and investment, and helping raise the issue of rural crime to the extent that Kent Police now has a dedicated rural crime force.

"I have raised the profile of Sittingbourne and Sheppey, and of issues like health deprivation in the area," Mr Henderson said.

"In the next couple of years, we will see an extension of the Eurolink Industrial Park, which is expected to create 1,000 jobs, and the Kemsley Fields industrial site; Kent Science Park has companies that are expanding; and Sheerness docks want to expand their operations. And the regeneration of Sittingbourne has been granted planning permission.

"I have opposed more development in our area until we get more roads and the government is proposing between £50 and £100 million to improve the Stockbury roundabout on the A249 and ease congestion. They are also looking at how the Sheppey Crossing can be made safer."

It has not all been progress though. The town centre plans were shot to

bits when Tesco pulled out of the original proposal, and Thamesteel's decision to pull the plug on its steel plant in Sheerness saw the loss of some 400 jobs, while Vestas' decision to pull out a giant wind turbine plant on Sheppey kissed goodbye to an anticipated 1,600 new jobs.

Labour candidate Guy Nicholson paints a less rosy picture.

"The main issues are public services, low wages, abuse of contracts – including zero hour contracts where people end up having to survive on less than the minimum wage," he said.

"Health and social care services are finding it extremely difficult to cope with demand, and we have high levels of mental health issues which are not being addressed.

"We have some of the highest levels of deprivation in England. Life expectancy in Leysdown is ten years lower than it is in Iwade. We have GPs with more than 4,000 patients registered to them – the national recommendation is 1,800.

"This is not how it should be. We can do better than this."

He says he wants to introduce a living wage and legislation to control the private rented sector.

"We have a very large private rented sector, and rent, agency fees and charges all combine to place an incredible burden on struggling households," Mr Nicholson added.

"The local housing association is waiting to build the kind of homes we need, and I would be giving them that support and calling on the government to invest in affordable housing.

"I look at Sittingbourne and Sheppey and I see energy, optimism and drive. It's about taking the assets we have and investing in those assets."

Green Party candidate Gary Miller



agrees more big employers are needed.

"The constituency has been starved of money because of austerity cuts, and it is lacking jobs. Sheppey doesn't have a lot of investment. I would push the government to target investment towards deprived areas," he said.

"I would like to see a change in business rates so companies can afford to set up, and I would be lobbying central government about this.

"I would also like to see tax loopholes tightened up and ideally got rid of. The financial industry has a very cosy relationship with the government and I would like to stop the revolving door between industry and government, with restrictions on contracts, so MPs are not allowed to get jobs in sectors over which they have had regulatory powers."

He agreed with Mr Nicholson that the price of accommodation was a serious issue.

"When we had council housing stock, that held the rents down and you could save money renting, but now rents are almost as high as a mortgage," Mr Miller said.

"I would have more affordable housing, and I would end the right-to-buy scheme."

And he said train performance targets should be based on passenger experience and reliability as well as punctuality, and that train companies should invest in more rolling stock.

Ukip candidate Richard Palmer,

## PREVIOUS RESULTS

### Past general election results for Sittingbourne and Sheppey

#### 2010

Gordon Henderson (Con) - 24,313 (50%)  
 Angela Harrison (Lab) - 11,930 (24.6%)  
 Keith Nevols (Lib Dem) - 7,943 (16.4%)  
 Ian Davison (Ukip) - 2,610 (5.4%)  
 Lawrence Tames (BNP) - 1,305 (2.7%)  
 Mad Mike Young (Monster Raving Loony) - 319 (0.7%)  
 David Cassidy (Independent) - 158 (0.3%)

**Majority: 12,383 (25.5%)**

Derek Wyatt, (Lab) - 17,051 (41.8%)  
 Gordon Henderson (Con) - 16,972 (41.6%)  
 Jane Nelson (Lib Dem) - 5,183 (12.7%)  
 Stephen Dean (Ukip) - 926 (2.3%)  
 Mad Mike Young (Rock 'n' Roll Loony) - 479 (1.2%)  
 David Cassidy (Veritas) - 192 (0.5%)

**Majority: 79 (0.2%)**



MP: Gordon Henderson



**LIB DEM:** Keith Nevols



**LABOUR:** Guy Nicholson



whose share of the vote may be crucial in determining the outcome of this seat, said there was not enough infrastructure to support new homes.

"The roads can't cope, people can't see their doctors, and the hospital can't cope with the pressure," he said.

"There should be no major housing developments until the infrastructure is sorted out."

He said he would go to organisations and encourage them to invest in the area, which would also help with the issue of commuter woe.

"People should be guaranteed a seat on trains, or they should get some money back. We should look at double decker trains too," he said.

"But instead of people travelling to London, maybe we can try to get companies to move out of London. A marina at Queenborough would attract people too. Look at the Isle of Wight, which has made its business out of its marina, sailing and tourism."

And he said the education system needed to work better.

"If you are not academic, you are dropped by the system," he said.

"There may be a lot of young people out there who would love to go into nursing, but don't want to go to university. People need to know that when they come out of school there is going to be work."

Liberal Democrat Keith Nevells said more big-name companies needed to be attracted to the town centres.

"We need to have people spend their money in town. At the moment young people go to Maidstone or Canterbury," he said.

## KOS PREDICTS...



AS WITH most seats held in recent memory by Labour in Kent, the margins of victory were narrow - and in Sittingbourne they were, as Mr Creosote might say, wafer thin.

While some opinion polls may still put Ed Miliband's party in front, there is no sense of the sea change which would be necessary to see this seat go red again... unless... there is the chance Ukip could split the vote. But it's a long shot. Henderson will surely win.

"I'd pitch the area to businesses around the country. There are also a lot of commuters here - I'm one of them - and every year prices go up by eight or nine per cent, but people don't see improved services or value for money.

"I would push for more freight on the railways - which would help the environment too as it would avoid the roads."

# Can anyone break the true blue grip?

By Sarah Linney

sarah.linney@archant.co.uk

IF history has lessons to teach us, then one of them is that if you are not a Tory, your chances of being elected in Folkestone and Hythe are not high.

The constituency has been blue since it was created in 1950, and had just two MPs over 50 years - Sir Albert Costain from 1959 to 1983, then Michael Howard until 2010.

And just this week, the media's spotlight has been turned on the area by Ukip election candidate and MEP Janice Atkinson's suspension from her party for 'allegations of a serious



MP: Damian Collins

## CANDIDATES

Damian Collins (Con)  
**Claire Jeffrey (Lab)**  
 Martin Whybrow (Green)  
**Lynne Beaumont (Lib Dem)**  
 Janice Atkinson (Ukip) - TBC  
**Seth Cruse (TUSC)**  
 Andrew Thomas-Emas (SPGB)  
**Dr Rohan Kapur (YPP)**

financial nature.' At the time KoS went to press no further details about the incident had been made public.

But is it safe to say any hopes Ukip may have had of springing a surprise here are probably now lying in tatters. Which will be music to the ears of incumbent MP Damian Collins.

He was already feeling confident of victory before this week's revelations.

He said his five years in charge have seen living standards in the constituency improve.

"Unemployment has fallen by nearly half since its peak, wages have risen faster than prices, and there has been fantastic growth in local businesses, with more and more of them looking to expand," he said.

"Nearly 2,000 young people are taking apprenticeships, compared

with 1,000 four years ago."

But Green candidate Martin Whybrow said it was not so simple.

"A lot of the jobs are of the wrong type - low wage, often zero hours work," he said.

And Labour candidate Claire Jeffrey said there were still a myriad of issues facing the constituency.

"The NHS, housing, low wages - the fact that people are struggling to heat their homes and eat," she said.

"We are not attracting enough investment. The harbour development needs to happen - I would be leaning on the developers big-time if I were Damian Collins."

Healthcare, she said, was another major issue.

"There is a lack of surgeries on Romney Marsh," Ms Jeffrey said. "And I'm concerned about how they'll pay for the Royal Victoria once the pilot funding runs out."

"We would repeal the Health and Social Care Act, and I support the NHS Reinstatement Bill, which says that everything which has already been privatised should come back."

Liberal Democrat Lynne Beaumont said it was not just about jobs, but about pay too.

"We need highly-skilled, highly-paid jobs," Ms Beaumont said.

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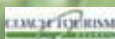


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## KOS PREDICTS...

Not all that long ago, Nigel Farage was pondering standing in Shepway.

The vote in local elections and in the Euro vote certainly showed a big swing in the direction of his party. But with the controversial figure of Janice Atkinson (possibly) as candidate, it is hard to see how she can re-build her brand sufficiently to carry the entire district. This will stay blue.



"People leave to go to university and don't come back because there aren't well-paid jobs. We need some serious big businesses to come to town who will offer decent wages."

She said the constituency should be promoted as a tourist area, adding: "Green tourism is the way forward for Romney Marsh. And I would like there to be a slipway in Folkestone harbour for people to launch boats."

"I would demolish Guildhall Street, which is full of old, unpleasant buildings and empty shops, and replace it with big-name shops and an attraction such as a fountain, clock or sculpture."

Green candidate Martin Whybrow said the area needed more affordable housing - but not at the expense of the countryside.

"There is a huge lack of affordable housing for first-time buyers," he said.

"We would try to extend the regulations - a lot of developers are able to get out of the requirement to make a lot of their homes affordable. There



**BLUE:** The only threat to the Tory stranglehold is likely to be from Ukip - but who will be standing for the party?

should also be an opportunity for other models, such as shared equity and self-build."

Ms Jeffrey said she was in favour of a lorry park as a solution to Operation Stack, but Mr Whybrow disagreed.

"We should be looking at getting more freight off the roads, and building stronger local economies so there is less reliance on imports," he said.

Speaking before her suspension, Ukip candidate Janice Atkinson said

she would get rid of town centre parking charges to help business.

"We would simplify planning regulations and licences for empty commercial property vacant for more than a year," she said.

"Doctors' surgeries would be open at least one night per week, and hospital parking charges would be scrapped. We also fully support nuclear energy."

Also standing are Andrew Tho-

mas-Emans, of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, and Seth Cruse, of the Trade Union and Socialist Coalition.

"We are looking for the abolition of the capitalist system, and an end to money," Mr Thomas said.

"People enjoy co-operating. It's built into our nature as much as competition."

Ukip may have had an outside chance here. After this week, they can kiss it goodbye.

## PREVIOUS RESULTS

### Past general election results for Folkestone and Hythe:

#### 2010

Damian Collins (Con) - 26,109 (49.4%)  
Lynne Beaumont (Lib Dem) - 15,987 (30.3%)  
Donald Worsley (Lab) - 5,719 (10.8%)  
Frank McKenna (Ukip) - 2,439 (4.6%)  
Harry Williams (BNP) - 1,662 (3.1%)  
Penny Kemp (Green) - 637 (1.2%)  
David Plumstead (Independent) - 247 (0.5%)

**Majority: 10,122 (19.2%)**

#### 2005

Michael Howard (Con) - 26,161 (53.9%)  
Peter Carroll (Lib Dem) - 14,481 (29.9%)  
Maureen Tomison (Lab) - 6,053 (12.5%)  
Hazel Dawe (Green) - 688 (1.4%)  
Petrina Holdsworth (Ukip) - 619 (1.3%)  
Lord Toby Jug (Monster Raving Loony) - 175 (0.4%)  
Rodney Hylton-Potts (Get Britain Back) - 153 (0.3%)  
Grahame Leon-Smith, Senior Citizens Party - 151 (0.3%)  
Sylvia Dunn (Peace and Progress) 22 - (0%)

**Majority: 11,680 (24.1%)**

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# Explosion's shockwaves continue 99 years later

On April 2, 1916, a Faversham munitions plant blew up with the blast felt as far away as Norfolk. But was it the work of a German spy? **Chris Murphy** looks back at a traumatic event

**W**HEN a Faversham munitions plant exploded nearly 100 years ago, the shockwaves were said to be felt as far away as Norfolk.

Windows in Southend, across the Thames Estuary in Essex were shattered. More than 100 people were killed. Seven believed to have been atomised such was the force of the explosion.

And even now, all these years later, it remains the topic of much conversation and debate - with one new theory proving particularly intriguing.

It was at 2.20pm on April 2, 1916, that life would forever change for the community in and around Faversham.

The country was already coming to terms with the First World War raging on mainland Europe and the enormous casualties which were falling on the killing fields of France and Belgium.

The nation had been mobilised to assist the war effort - no more so than in Faversham.

There, the town had become the heart of the explosives industry; home of the first gunpowder plant in the 16th century, ideally positioned given an abundance of charcoal and watermills, and a Thames-side port for easy transportation, and a swift route to the Continent.

In demand not just for warfare, the need for explosives to help fuel progress during the industrial revolution kept it in heavy demand.

By the time of the outbreak of the Great War, there were two factories - and both were requisitioned for the war effort.

But as production stepped up, the risks did too.

At around 2.15pm that afternoon - nearly exactly 99 years ago - a small fire had been sparked among some empty sacks at the Exploding Loading Company factory at Uplees.

A number of workers at the site began to tackle the flames, when the instruction came from factory manager George Evetts that the site should be evacuated.

Almost no sooner than the instruction had been given the explo-

sion rocked the whole of the south east region.

Some 109 men and boys were killed. It would no doubt have been more, other than for the factory's remote location on the marshes.

In addition, it was a Sunday, so no women were working. It was a small blessing.

Some 200 tonnes of TNT was detonated as the fire spread. The warm spring sunshine thought to have provided the heat to spark the flames.

The entire Works Fire Brigade were among the dead.

At least, that was the official version.

Remarkably, now there is a counter claim that there may have been a more sinister motive; a German saboteur.

Now Paul Reid has revealed what his mother told him of that terrible day.

His grandfather was Rickman Munnery Moore Palowkar, born in 1885. He then married Beatrice Mary Baker in 1912, only to be killed during the war in 1916.



But they had three children, Margaret, Dorothy and Rickman in the year of the blast.

Mr Reid said: "On April 2, Beatrice was in the early stages of pregnancy and at home in Faversham looking after their two young children when news broke of the explosion.

"Apparently the Uplees plant explosion, according to the local newspapers was caused by heat-generated combustion.

"This is not what my mum, Dorothy, said had happened.

"She always said it was a German

spy disguised as a Catholic priest who caused the TNT plant to explode and the only way that they were able to identify my grandfather was by his mop of hair. They only reported the event one month after it had happened in the papers and stated that all the shop windows on the seafront at Southend-on-Sea were broken and some at Canvey island. The bang was heard as far north as Harwich and probably Felixstowe."

The revelation came to light on the popular Faversham history site - Faversham.org - where manager

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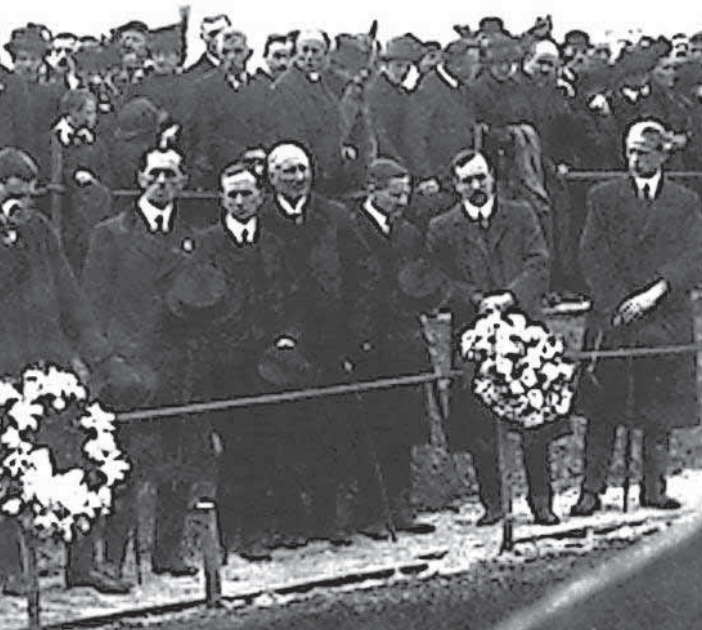


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Lucy Guthrie explained what happened.

She told us: "In August last year I received an email from Paul Reid talking about his grandparents and how the Uplees explosion effected their lives personally.

"In the email Paul mentioned the views of his mother concerning the tragic event and he was kind enough to share some family photos. Living in Faversham and knowing what a small community it is, and was then, the impact of the explosion on Faversham would have been devastating

for the town. It was touching and interesting to receive such a personal account."

The crater made by the explosion was 40 yards across and 20 feet deep.

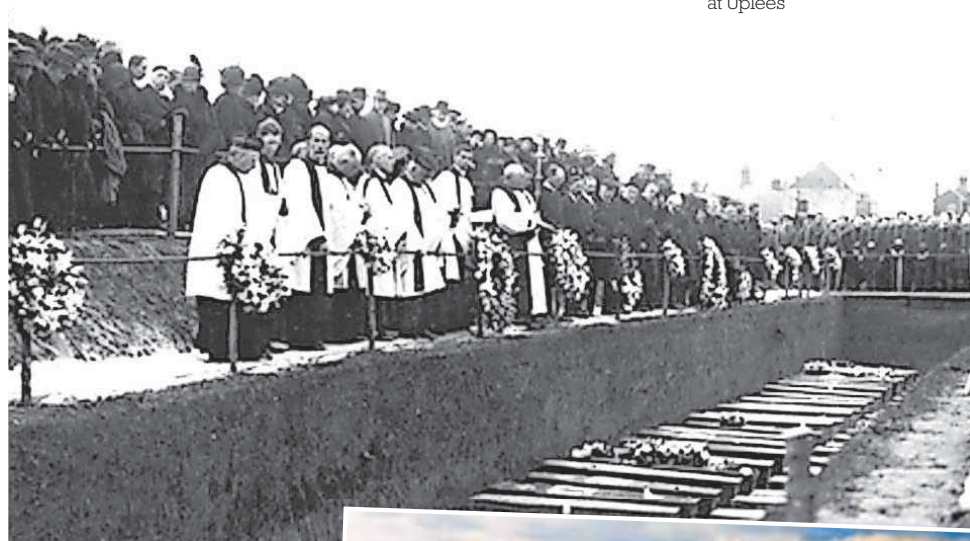
Not surprisingly, the neighbouring Cotton Powder Company's huge factory was also seriously damaged. Most of its site now forms the Oare Marshes Nature Reserve - a site of international importance for its bird life. It is a desolate reminder of the horror that struck that day. There is no road to the scene - the only way

to reach it is by foot.

With such a massive human toll, it remains the worst disaster ever to occur in the history of the UK explosives industry.

Many bodies were recovered from the surrounding marshes and dykes, but seven were recorded as missing, most probably atomised by the explosion.

Many of the dead were buried in a mass grave at Faversham Cemetery on April 6, 1916. Memorial services are still held today to remember those who never stood a chance.



**TRIBUTES:** A mass funeral was held for the victims of the blast at the Exploding Loading Company factory at Uplees

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# Wodehouse classic hits the stage

**Chris Britcher** reviews the latest adaptation of PG Wodehouse's comedy creations, *Jeeves & Wooster*

**REVIEW: Jeeves & Wooster**  
at the Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury

**T**HE sign of good comedy is always its appeal across the demographics.

If you can get the young and old rocking in the aisles simultaneously, you have hit upon a formula which will surely last

the test of time.

And there can be few comedy creations more adept at straddling the generations than PG Wodehouse's *Jeeves and Wooster* - a double act which saw the author's use of the English language slip and slide in a way which leaves the reader feeling like they have been caressed by a feather duster - occasionally tickled lightly or delivered with a real belly laugh.

As a consequence, Wodehouse's legion of fans have often approached adaptations of his work with a little trepidation.

When you start with such beloved original texts and the magic of the reader's imagination, trying to do that justice is often mission impossible.

Yet perhaps that anxiety means there is a very real danger that future generations may overlook the bum-

bling Bertie Wooster and his trusty butler Jeeves.

Certainly, the audience on the opening night of its run of shows this week at the Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury - the shows ran from Tuesday to Saturday - would hint that it needs to be brought to a wider audience to again engage a younger audience.

The over-50 brigade are out in force. Reassuringly, and no doubt as a result of its casting, there are plenty of youthful faces too.

Perhaps fuelled by its last mainstream outing of any real note being Hugh Laurie and Stephen Fry's ITV outing of the early 1990s, it would indeed be a crying shame if the comedy clout it still delivers is lost to a younger generation sometimes deterred by anything which appears in any way dated.

Which is where this latest stage rendition comes in to play. *Jeeves and Wooster* in *Perfect Nonsense* - based around PG Wodehouse's *The Code of the Woosters* - is proof positive that the power of the dialogue and talent of just three actors, is sufficient to pull off a compelling performance.

Robert Webb (he of big hit shows such as that *Mitchell & Webb*

Look, the sublime *Peep Show* and more voice overs than you can shake a cheque-laden stick at) manages to capture Wooster's buffoonery with aplomb; the man always finding himself caught in the middle of his elaborately-named friends' mishaps.

He is a fine performer, combining the inane grin and happy-go-lucky approach to life of Bertie to good effect.

For Webb, the performance is confined purely to Wooster. For his two colleagues, versatility is order of the day.

Jason Thorpe (whose credits include everything from big screen outings in the likes of the *Fast & Furious 6* to *Poldark* and the BBC's *Little Dorrit*) is *Jeeves*... and a variety of other roles... and he carries them all off in style, and with some marvellous comedy timing.

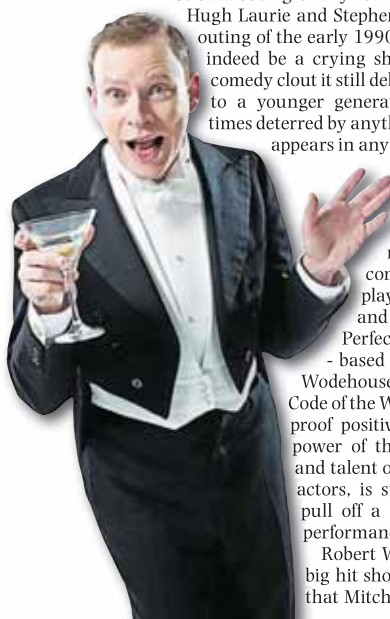
As does Christopher Ryan (best known as Mike from the *Young Ones*) as Seppings. And it is he who perhaps steals the show with a wealth of roles allowing him to dip in and out of various characters often in the space of the same sentence.

It would perhaps spoil the enjoyment of those catching this performance for the rest of its run, but there are some wonderful set-pieces which demonstrate some glorious direction and excellent performances.

The end result was an audience laughing out loud throughout. Not just smile humour, but some proper belly laughs.

PG Wodehouse's creations continue to live on in shows such as this and the three performers should take a great deal of pride in keeping the flag flying.

**STAR:** Robert Webb as Bertie



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KOS/15



**TRIO:** Jason Thorpe, Robert Webb and Christopher Ryan portray all characters in production

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# Author refuses to put down her pen... even at the age of 94

**Molly Kersey** speaks to best-selling historic romance author

**A**T THE age of 94, most people would be settled into their retirement and enjoying a well-earned rest from working life.

But this is not the case for Claire Lorrimer, who is currently writing her 80th novel and shows little desire to get off the treadmill of promotional events and library talks for those interested in her work.

The writer, who lives in a cottage near Edenbridge, has enjoyed huge success, with her first historical romance, *Mavreen*, published in 1976, became an instant hit, selling two million copies in its first year alone.

Not that she was any stranger to publishing success.

Her mother, Denise Robins, was an international best-seller, dubbed the 'queen of romance'. Writing under a host of pen names, she spent six years as president of the Romantic Novelists' Association.

Her daughter Claire – born Patricia Robins in 1921 – was perhaps destined to follow in her literary footsteps.

"She encouraged me," said Ms Lorrimer.

"She gave me a portable type writer when I was 12 to keep me out of mischief. I was an imaginative child and we lived in the country, where in those days we had no television or video games. I usually had a good idea, and

the ideas nearly always went wrong. My mother said 'let's put them on paper rather than act them out'.

"That's how I began and I wrote a children's book. It was about some baby rabbits who went on a picnic and got lost."

Ms Lorrimer didn't write again until the Second World War, where she carried out vital work tracking incoming enemy aircraft.

Her war work with the Dowding system – a radar essential to keeping our skies protected – led to her showing Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall a bronze statue of her wartime self in a recreated filter room at the Battle of Britain Museum in Bentley Priory, an RAF base near Harrow.

During this time she wrote romance stories for a magazine under her real name, Patricia Robins.

"They paid me £10, which was a fortune in those days," said Ms Lorrimer.

She used this money to attend NAAFI dances, where she met her long-term partner Mel.

In the 1970s, she took an unexpected change of direction and began to write historical romances on the advice of her literary agent Desmond Elliot.

She explained: "History was not my strong subject and I put off doing it for two years, then finally I gave it a go."

Starting from scratch, she delved into the subject and is grateful for the 'invaluable' help provided by a librarian in East Grinstead, just over the border in East Sussex.

"In desperation I went to my local library and asked the librarian for a book on the Duke of Wellington.

"Bless her, she was marvellous. She produced books on clothes, on houses, on events of the time. She produced all these reference books that I could look up and I then became so absorbed in the history that I hated at school.

"It was quite interesting

really, it converted me entirely from a history hater to a history lover."

The book took off, and was the first of many historical romances.

"It was reprinted 13 times in its first year and was reprinted again two years ago," she said.

So where does the writer find inspiration?

"People talk about inspiration, but I myself don't believe there is such a thing. I think it's something triggering an idea," she explained.

One such idea sprang from what Ms Lorrimer believed was a snub from someone she had met at a party, when she saw her in a shop.

It actually turned out that the person she had met had an identical twin, and hadn't ignored her at all.

From this the idea for *The Silver Link* was developed, which sees a girl called Adela fleeing a cruel stepfather with the help of the Mallory twins.

And despite attempts to retire, Ms Lorrimer's passion for writing has continued to pull her back.

"At 75 I decided it was high time I retired. I had, so to speak, packed up work and then something happened and I thought - that would make a good book, and I told myself 'no, don't you start that', and then I went to bed and it tormented me. Until I got it on paper I couldn't forget about it.

"It's something that happens I think, if you have been writing for a long time you are attuned to what makes a good story," she said.

She has followed in the footsteps of her mother, whose novels have sold 200 million copies worldwide.

"My mother was such a good example. Every morning she would go into her study and write until lunch time," she said.

"We never actually wrote together but we were constantly in touch and she was so much help to me, if I got stuck or didn't like the way I had written something. We were very much in cahoots the whole time."

Both Ms Lorrimer's and Ms Robin's books are now available for the first time as e-books from Hodder.



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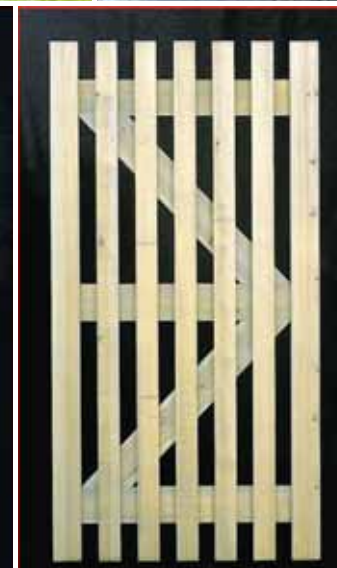




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Changing face of the Kent Test examination



SEE PAGE 6

What are county's top non-selective schools?



SEE PAGE 10

Free schools: Health check on new kids on the block



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PULL-OUT SUPPLEMENT

## Election result will be defining factor on the grammar annexe plan

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

IT STARTED life as a saga and is now fast approaching epic status – and still, it seems, the prospect of a grammar school in Sevenoaks hangs agonisingly in the balance.

With a decision expected in January or February, it was not until March that finally it became apparent it would be joining those big county decisions delayed until after the election.

Just like the location of the third Thames crossing or the decision on airport expansion plans, a decision has been hurled forward – infuriating campaigners.

They were desperate for it to be nodded through early this year – to allow work to commence on the Seal Hollow Road site of the former Wildernes school. And to ensure there was no danger of the pro-grammar Conservatives not being the principle decision-makers in Westminster.

But instead of a bold decision one

way or the other, news dribbled out – an apparent 'leak' from Number 10.

Education secretary Nicky Morgan was "not going to be rushed" into making a decision while only unnamed sources elaborated by claiming the minister would "make a decision if she can" before May 7 but not without first considering "all the legal advice and all the options".

Official comment was not forthcoming.

Should the Conservatives once again emerge as the major party, it seems highly likely the plan would get the green light early in its next term. But further coalition agreements could yet throw a spanner in the works.

Grammars and the selective process divide opinion and define ideologies.

However, if Ed Miliband proves a success, it is hard to imagine, once he's finished unpacking in Downing Street, he'll agree to such an expansion of a schooling system so against the party's core beliefs.

Tristram Hunt, the shadow education secretary, has suggested he

would certainly consider the proposal, should his party be in power, but added "to my mind it looks pretty much like a new grammar school".

Sarah Shilling has been the vocal spearhead of the push for the school.

She said: "They have had three years to make this decision. And now, because there is an election on the horizon, no one wants to make a difficult decision."

"But our children still have to travel for hours in the dark to get to school."

With planning permission already given the nod for the Wildernes site to be developed, it is just the Government approval which is awaited.

The school driving forward the grammar plans is the Weald of Kent Grammar. The girls' school would be the parent school for the project. An initial bid submitted last year for a mixed annexe was thrown out by then education secretary Michael Gove after five months of consideration.

A revised and re-submitted proposal was put forward last October. It had been hoped a decision would be made by January.



**FUTURE:** This is how it would look if given the go-ahead

## The complex equation at the heart of grammar expansion

SO JUST why is there such an issue over the creation of another grammar in the county?

It is prohibited for any new grammar schools to be built in England; a law introduced during Tony Blair's era. Kent is one of just a few places which retains the selection system with around the top 20 per cent of students judged capable of attending a grammar creamed off after sitting the Kent Test.

The draw back is that many consider making such a judgement at 11 is unfair. It also puts a huge strain on the non-selectives to deliver the exam results demanded by the government, and necessary for strong Ofsted reports.

Others, however, will point to the benefits it can bring – fast-

tracking the most able students and creating cultures for them to flourish. Certainly there is no denying a grammar school education remains highly prized by parents and employers alike.

Sevenoaks, though, has no grammar. Instead children passing the 11-plus must travel to Tonbridge or Tunbridge Wells – at least a 10-mile journey.

However, a way around the new grammar ban is with the creation of a so-called annexe – run by the same management as an existing nearby grammar. Supported by the Tory-lead Kent County Council and Michael Fallon, the town's MP, it had been hoped to open the school for students by the start of the academic year in 2016.

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# INSPECTION SUCCESS

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Many schools may be pleased to be recognised as excellent (or as the top grade used to be, 'outstanding') in one or two areas of an inspection report but Kent College is delighted that the ISI inspection team of 18 which visited in January judged the school to be excellent in every aspect. This follows on from the last ISI inspection in 2009 and an Ofsted boarding inspection in 2011 where all areas were deemed 'outstanding'.

Since the previous inspection in 2009, the college has undertaken a number of curriculum changes to further its commitment to the development of individuals: restructuring of setting arrangements; introduction of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma alongside A Levels; extended teaching time; the addition of new subjects; one-to-one computer provision; an increase in accelerated learning programmes and bespoke timetabling. The house system has been restructured to enhance integration and many teaching and boarding facilities have been extended and improved.



Kent College is very successful in meeting its aims. The pupils' achievements and learning are excellent.

Pupils achieve excellent results.

Pupils benefit from an excellent and inventive curriculum. Bespoke timetabling enables the college to meet pupils' subject choices and, for instance, additional practice time for advanced athletes or musicians. Pupils are recognised as individuals and all staff take pride in encouraging and supporting each to achieve his or her best.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.



**THE QUALITY OF PASTORAL CARE IS EXCELLENT. THE COLLEGE IS HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL IN PROMOTING GOOD BEHAVIOUR. A CULTURE OF CARE PERVADES ALL AREAS OF THE COLLEGE.**

Since 2012 a cohort of pupils has taken IB examinations. Their results have been exceptional in relation to the worldwide average and have regularly placed Kent College in the top ten schools nationally. Alongside this, students have enjoyed success in A levels with 77% of all grades at A\*-B last summer and 5\* GCSE results match the best selective schools. Pupils are equally successful in achieving high levels in a wide range of co-curricular activities with notable successes in national science and mathematics competitions. Many pupils learn a musical instrument; participation in concerts and dramatic performances is high, with individual and group **success at national level**. In games, pupils represent county and national teams in hockey, which is a particular strength. County and national recognition has also been achieved in a range of individual pursuits, including cross-country, skiing, riding and tennis.

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Pupils' behaviour towards one another is excellent, reflecting the school's primary aim to be a caring community. Pupils listen carefully to each other's views and are supportive of each other. Pupils are confident, courteous and caring young people with a strong social conscience and an appreciation of the wider world: they engage in a variety of charitable activities. They are well prepared to lead happy and fulfilling lives. They are proud of their school and its central part in their lives.

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# Calls increase for changes to the way Ofsted inspects schools to ease stress

Say 'Ofsted inspection' to a teacher and watch them shiver. **Maria Chiorando** asks if it's time for a change

**P**RESSURE is growing for a change in the way Ofsted inspections are conducted in the county - with one union chief saying they can be a "source of great anxiety" applying additional pressure to already over stretched teachers.

The power of the Ofsted report has grown in recent years - get a positive response and it can ensure admission numbers swell and the funding which goes with it.

However, failure can deliver the opposite.

While few will argue that a robust series of regular inspections is essential to ensure education and care standards are high, many point to the county's selective system putting them at a significant disadvantage.

What's more, with just 24-hours notice before inspectors from the education watchdog descend on a school, the pressure it applies can be immense.

John Walder is the secretary of the Kent division of the National Union of Teachers (NUT).

He told KoS: "There is an idea that the profession of teaching should be subject to scrutiny - and we accept that. And there is no doubt that Ofsted plays a very large role in education.

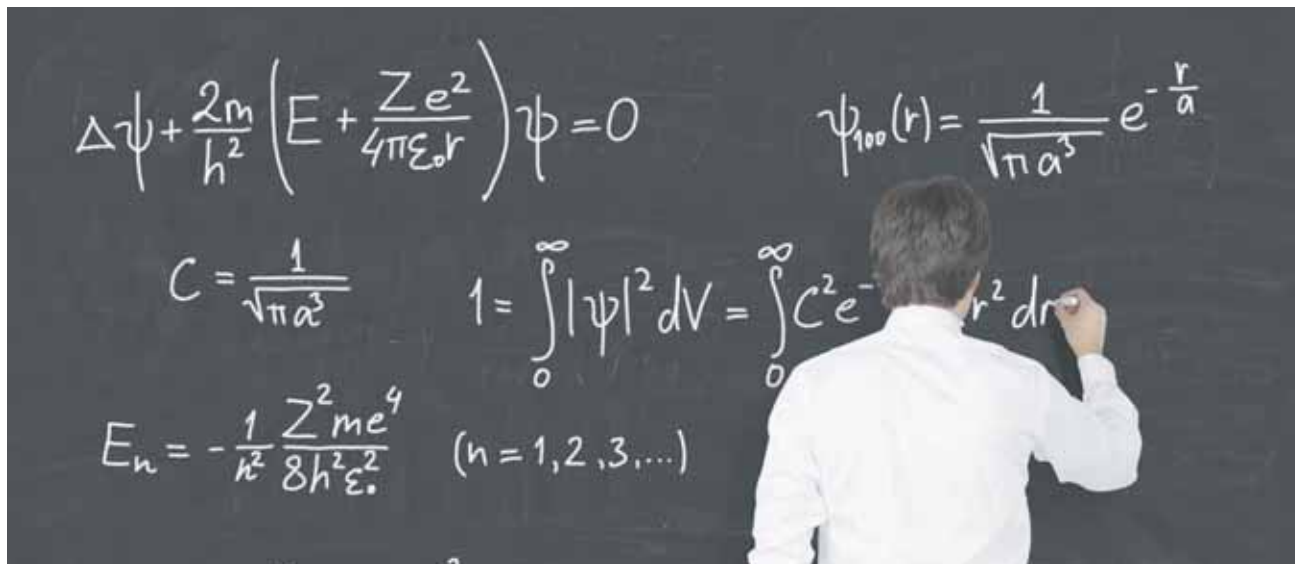
"But for many - though not all - of the teachers I have spoken to, Ofsted can be an imposition, trial, and source of anxiety. Imagine an inspector coming into any office, and scrutinising everything being done - it is highly stressful."

Giving establishments 24 hours' notice (or, in certain circumstances, no notice), inspectors will come in, observe and present the school with a rating, looking at lessons, students grades, behaviour and attendance.

It will then deliver an overall rating for the school - either outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate.

If a school is judged inadequate, it can be put into 'special measures' if the inspector believes the school is unable to improve without help.

Earlier this year, the Association of



**SUMS:** But does the Ofsted formula fit the whole country given our selective system?

Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) called for the rating system to be scrapped or overhauled.

It said: "The focus on producing a single overall grade is meaningless and outmoded: data on pupil achievement in schools falling below current floor targets shows little difference between schools that Ofsted says 'require improvement' and those schools Ofsted has judged 'good'."

Kent County Council, however, remains convinced Ofsted provides an essential guide for schools to conform to, providing external guidance where necessary to drive up standards, or celebrate those hitting targets.

A KCC spokesperson said: "We work closely with Ofsted and believe they are driving up standards in schools which we fully support.

"We are aiming for all schools in Kent to be rated as 'good' or 'outstanding'. Children only have one chance at their education and every child in Kent should go to a good school."

The issue facing many is that Ofsted is a national framework, that does not take into account the educational system in this county.

Sean Heslop, the executive principal of Folkestone Academy and the Marlowe Academy in Thanet, explains: "Kent is different to other areas in so far as we are a selective area.

"To give a statistic, there are 24 schools rated 'outstanding' in the county, and 22 of those are selective schools. This system misses the context of non-selective schools."

In short, if you cream off the top 20 per cent of students at 11 to go to grammar schools, you cannot expect the grade average to hold up for the others.

Due to exam results and falling student numbers, the Marlowe Academy will be merging with the Ellington and Hereson School from September 2015.

Despite this, Mr Heslop feels fairly positive about the inspections.

He says: "I have been a head for 10

years, and in that time have had three inspections. By and large, inspectors want to work with you, and you want to have a good relationship.

"The process is not something to be feared - it can be helpful."

"The problem now is that we look at raw results - selective schools are going to have better results.

"I believe the emphasis in the future will be more about looking at progress from entering the school up until five years later.

"This will be much more effective. "The reports are one of the first things parents will look at, and they are a starting point.

"But I would always advise people to look at other things - how are pupils getting on in the school, try and paint a fuller picture."

The NUT's Mr Walder still feels that the system is not quite fit for purpose, saying: "There are alternatives which would fit the bill better - Ofsted was conceived and composed by those

above, rather than grown organically from the profession."

According to Ofsted, these much needed changes are on the agenda.

Sir Robin Bosher, south east director, said: "I know there are many myths about Ofsted's work which I want to dispel.

"That is why I recently met Kent headteachers to discuss their concerns and offer reassurances.

"I recognise that we have a shared aim, and that most teachers and headteachers are working tirelessly to provide young people with a good quality of education across the whole county.

"We all want children to have the same high quality education, so inspectors focus on those schools which are not yet good.

"It remains the case though that in Kent, pupils from poorer backgrounds perform less well than their wealthier peers - they and their parents deserve better."

## Decision day looms for Furness

A CONSULTATION into the future of a school for children with special educational needs, which faces the threat of closure, ends this week.

The Furness School in Hextable, near Swanley, a special school for high functioning students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), faces being 'discontinued' by the end of August.

It comes with admissions at just half of capacity and a steady decline over the last seven years.

In addition, financial estimates say it will have a budget deficit of some £1.6 million this year.

Parents are thought to have opted, instead, to send their children to special units attached to mainstream schools.

The public consultation, was launched by Kent County Council and the interim executive board of the school, at the beginning of February and runs until Wednesday,

March 25. However, it has not been without controversy.

Education specialist Peter Read has claimed Kent County Council should have been aware of the issues when it switched the school's status from that for behavioural, emotional and social needs to high functioning ASD students just last summer.

He now fears inadequate coverage for children with ASD in the west of the county.

He said: "Why did the proposal document for the school's redesignation make no mention of the financial problems of the school that have led to its proposed closure seven months later? Was this omission deliberate or is there some other explanation of this disastrous decision?"

KCC chiefs say they will not comment on the issues until the consultation period ends.



**THREAT:** Furness School



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**EXAM:** Just how have the changes to the Kent Test been received?



# Have Kent Test changes revived the social mobility claim of selectives?

One year on, amid claims of now being 'tutor-proof', views are divided on its success. **Molly Kersey** reports

**A** YEAR after its introduction, education chiefs say the new-look Kent Test is proving a success - but insist it will continue to be "reworked" over the coming years.

The 11-plus exam, which determines which pupils are best suited to a grammar school education, was given a major overhaul amid mounting concerns over the ability to coach students to a pass mark.

As a consequence, that can leave some students struggling if they are then successful in applying for a grammar school place as workloads accelerate.

But those who make a living out of offering additional tuition say little has changed and that they are just as busy as ever.

So has it done what it set out to do? Kent County Council's cabinet member for education, Roger Gough, believes the changes have worked.

He told KoS: "The whole thing is now done on one day, when it previously used to stretch over two. We put back in the English element, it used to be maths, verbal reasoning and non-verbal reasoning. The balance is a bit different."

Certainly the original format of the test was no walk in the park. Even some parents would find some of the mind gymnastics required to solve some of the problems a real challenge.

But therein lay the problem. With a whole industry set up around provid-

**“One of the reasons was to relieve pressure on students, but I don't think having three exams on one day relieves pressure. It probably increases it”**

**Kerry Pitman,**  
Kent Test tutor

ing sample questions and guidance to how to tackle them, the basic concept of a grammar school delivering social mobility was being destroyed.

Instead, middle class parents who were able to devote time with their children, or hire in help, were able to unlock the exam and give their child the best possible chance of securing a mark to qualify them for grammar selection.

There were even claims the prep schools were offering almost a guarantee to fee-paying parents that they would coach their students through the test, allowing them to leap back into the state sector but in a selective system.

With teachers at state schools prevented from teaching their children the intricacies of the Kent Test, it was clearly becoming an issue.

Today there are now two main tests, one that assesses reasoning ability and one assessing attainment

in literacy and numeracy.

A writing task under test conditions is also completed, which is available for headteacher panels to look at for borderline cases - students who have narrowly missed the requirements needed to pass.

"It's made it a lot less predictable in terms of how the questions were done and it's going to continue to be reworked quite a bit," added Cllr Gough.

"There were quite a few surprises. It was to try and make it a bit closer to what is in the curriculum and a bit less predictable."

Overall this year, 28 per cent of girls and 25 per cent of boys in the county were assessed as being at a grammar school standard, 20.6 per cent of children in selective areas gained an automatic pass and 6.2 per cent secured selective assessments through the headteacher assessment.

So is it now tutor-proof?

Cllr Gough says that was never the aim of the changes.

"It's nonsense," he says, "I have deliberately resisted that sort of rhetoric. I never use that language. There are many, many reasons why people may choose to do that and it's not my business to pick on that, but what we do want to do is make it that better test of raw ability."

Kerry Pitman, who tutors in Canterbury, Ashford and surrounding areas, said that many people still see the benefit of tutoring and demand hasn't dropped.

He said: "At the moment I am busier than I have been before. Things

haven't become quieter and people haven't decided that the changes mean they no longer need tutoring.

"In terms of taking tutoring out, the 11-plus is essentially built around the curriculum. It's true to a certain extent that if you are competent at the curriculum then you are reasonably well positioned to take the Kent Test, but there is an additional problem solving element which is much more developed than what they do at school.

"Although they use the curriculum you have to learn how to problem solve and that's part of the tutoring process."

Cllr Gough is convinced the new test is more robust. He adds: "We were certainly pleased with many aspects of the outcome.

"Anecdotally, many of the schools say to us that they felt that the kids who got through were they ones who they often thought should.

"The number of very high scores at the top end didn't thrive, which suggests in a sense it was stretching people a bit and providing something that was a little less predictable.

"Previously a lot of schools really had an issue. There were a very high number of children scoring maximum marks or very close to maximum marks."

Whether it is working continues to split opinion perhaps as much as it did before.

Anita Clemens, of the Rochester Tuition Centre, said: "I think all in all it's actually quite positive but I am

not sure that it's worked for the reasons the changes were made. They have added a formal English paper.

"The idea was that it should be more inclusive for children who haven't been tutored and I don't see how formal grammar does that.

"Formal grammar puts at an advantage children who come from a home where they usually speak using the correct grammar. Children who come from homes where parents say 'I done it' rather than 'I did it' are obviously less likely to do well with the formal grammar, and those are the very children that the test was supposed to help do better."

Ms Clemens added: "It's good that children have to do those things but it does just make more for them to do, so people are more likely to seek tutoring. We certainly have not found less people coming along, we have found more than ever before in fact."

Kerry Pitman adds: "I think they failed in whatever they were trying to do and just made the situation worse. "I think it's actually been a detrimental development.

"Previously the test was held on two days, with two exams on the first day and two on the second day. Now they have the exams on one day and I believe they do three on one day, which is not good. One of the reasons was to relieve pressure on students, but I don't think having three exams on one day relieves pressure. It probably increases it. Three tests in a day is a lot, so from that point of view it wasn't really a success."



# Non-selectives worthy of top marks

So often over-looked due to the county's selective system, there are countless excellent high schools we can be proud of. Education specialist **Peter Read** takes a look at just a few that are top of the class...

By Peter Read

www.kentadvice.co.uk



**O**NCE again, we hear cries from certain politicians for more grammar school places across the country, the opposition responding by referring disparagingly to the creation of more 'secondary moderns'.

This of course takes us back to the 1950s, when the 'sec mod' only ran up to age 15, and most children took no examinations. Since then the landscape has changed dramatically, and the large majority of Kent's non-selective (NS) schools are performing well to ensure that overall Kent's GCSE performance is consistently above average.

This article makes no statement about the virtues or otherwise of the selective system in Kent, but in it I have been asked to look at some of the best of the non-selectives – itself an ungainly title.

This is a personal choice, and I apologise to some very good schools I

have been forced to leave out for reasons of space.

Leading the field have to be the two Tunbridge Wells church schools: Bennett Memorial Diocesan and St Gregory's Catholic, both with Outstanding Ofsted and both regularly topping the non-selective GCSE tables.

Bennett has a strong church requirement that attracts many academically able children, as it became one of the most oversubscribed schools in the county, St Greg's having a more mixed intake but still performing highly.

The third Tunbridge Wells non-selective school, Skinners Kent Academy is an example of what can be done with outstanding leadership, more important than the excellent new purpose-built buildings it has recently moved into.

For most of the past 40 years, its predecessors, variously named in attempts to shrug off a poor reputation, struggled to attract students, but in the past four years the academy has become the eighth most over-subscribed NS school in the county, its headteacher, Sian Carr, being variously described as

charismatic and inspirational.

Otherwise, in no particular order: further north in Dartford is the highest performing academy chain in the county, headed up by the Leigh Academy, until this year the most popular NS school in the county.

Its first principal, Frank Green, has gone on to become Schools Commissioner for England.

The Leigh Academies Trust has taken over two other north west Kent schools, Wilmington Academy which it has taken from special measures to good Ofsted, at the same time seeing its GCSE results soar to among the best NS in the county in 2013, and Longfield Academy, previously an unpopular, struggling school which was one of the most oversubscribed schools in Kent in 2014.

Fulston Manor School in Sittingbourne, is the second most popular NS school in the county.

Its good Ofsted rating (it has also been outstanding) is in no small part due to its headteacher, Alan Brookes, a fiercely loyal servant of the school, who joined as a junior member of staff 33 years ago and has now been head for 18 years.



**PRAISED:** Hartsdown Academy's Andy Somers

John Wallis CofE Academy in Ashford is perhaps a surprising choice, headed up by John McParland, who has the distinction of having also been head of one of Kent's top per-

forming NS schools, St Simon Stock Catholic School in Maidstone.

His move was a surprise to many people as St Simon Stock (SSS) was at the top of the tree, and John Wallis

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**DEMAND:** Skinners' Academy in Tunbridge Wells



was a struggling school in a difficult part of town.

However, SSS continues to maintain its excellent standards under the new(ish) leadership and John Wallis now fills, and has been at the top of Kent's value-added GCSE league table for two years, one of nine NS schools in the top 20.

This measure identifies the progress made by students between

the ages of 11 and 16, but is rarely given prominence, although it is the best indicator of the value added to children by their education, irrespective of socio-economic standing.

Third highest NS GCSE performer this year is St George's CofE School, Gravesend, also second highest across the county for value added, apparently on its knees just five years ago, having been placed in special

measures, and lost the confidence of local parents.

A new headteacher, Anne Southgate – previously deputy head – took over the reins and in three years raised the school to good under Ofsted, saw its popularity and exam results soar, but retired in the summer, although the school still appears in good hands, having again appointed its deputy.



**SUCCESS:** Bennett Memorial students celebrate A-level results above



The other six top value add (VA) schools are: Bennett; St Gregory's; St Augustine's Academy, Maidstone, St Simon Stock, St Edmund's, Canterbury; Hillview, Tonbridge; and Kent Skinners Academy.

The Canterbury Academy is led by Phil Karnavas, who has been with the school for 25 years.

It has totally changed from the previously troubled Canterbury High

School, and includes a primary school, and an enormous range of sports facilities open to the public which have become a centre of excellence.

The school is now regularly oversubscribed, and in 2014 took on an extra two classes to cater for all the additional first choices he had un-

**Continues on Page 36**

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Continues From Page 35

wisely offered places to at the open evening that year.

Valley Park School in Maidstone is another centre of excellence, this time in performing arts, regularly in the top three most oversubscribed schools in Kent, historically with the tightest catchment area in the county.

It has achieved that rarity for a non-selective school, of two consecutive outstanding Ofsted.

For 2015 entry, it changed the straight distance admission criterion to one giving priority to children whose nearest school was Valley Park (think about it!), initially confusing, but it makes sense.

My next choice is well outside the conventional view of a good school, except that Ofsted agrees, having found it good on two consecutive inspections. This is Hartsdown Academy, Margate, led by an inspirational and outspoken executive principal, Andrew Somers.

In passing, it has one of the best school websites I have visited. Mr Somers has passionately campaigned for improved premises after competing schools were rebuilt, and was rewarded two weeks ago when the school received government approval for funding a significant premises development.

Like the Marlowe Academy, Hartsdown has more than its fair share of deprivation, children with SEN, and with English as a second language. The difference is that he makes it work, as Ofsted confirms.

One of the rebuilt schools that competes with Hartsdown is King Ethelbert School, Birchington, although both are part of the Coastal Academies Trust which is led by Paul Luxmoore, previously head of Dane Court Grammar school and the inspiration behind another highly successful academy chain, now absorbing the closing Marlowe Academy.

King Ethelbert is the fourth most oversubscribed NS school in Kent this year, having become more popular year on year.

A school very much in the news is Knole Academy, Sevenoaks, led by Mary Boyle. She has overseen the amalgamation of two disparate schools, and has worked through the merger with great success.

The school sits in the middle of a political controversy, with the proposed Sevenoaks grammar school annexe to be sited just down the road, alongside the new Trinity Free School that has itself established an early reputation.

Knole now runs a high profile grammar stream, and Mary Boyle works hard to establish the school as fully comprehensive with no need of extra grammar places in the town.

Just two NS schools have consecutive outstanding Ofsted, the second being Westlands School in Sittingbourne, lead school in the Swale Academies Trust, but although it has suffered a fall in popularity for 2015 admission, it remains oversubscribed.

I was given a generous word limit for this article, but it is apparent there

## THE AUTHOR...

PETER Read is a former headteacher who has spent over 40 years in.

For the last decade, he has run a flourishing consultancy and advisory service on school appeal and admissions.

His Kent Independent Education Advice service offers advice solely for parents living in the Kent and Medway local authority areas.

A regular on TV and radio - and long-time Kent on Sunday columnist - you can read more of his regular comments and education news from across the county via his website [www.kentadvice.co.uk](http://www.kentadvice.co.uk).



**LEARNING:** There's a lot of good work in our classrooms

are too many good NS schools in Kent to be covered in detail.

Others include: Wrotham School, a pastorally strong, friendly achieving, small rural school; St John's Catholic Comprehensive in Gravesend - the fifth highest performing NS at GCSE, just behind St George's C of E, also Gravesend, with every Gravesend NS having a good Ofsted assessment; Hillview Girls, Tonbridge - always one of the highest performing NS schools - sixth in GCSE this year, and one of the most popular; Sandwich Technology College, about which I know little, except that families think highly of it with the recently retired headteacher, Veronica Gomez, receiving rave reports.

ceiving rave reports.

Mascalls in Paddock Wood, looked down on by some families in west Kent for not being a grammar school, but clearly delivers a first rate education; Abbey in Faversham which has taken years to throw off its dreadful reputation before the current headteacher, Catrin Woodend led it to two good Ofsted; and Herne Bay High, always oversubscribed, sometimes heavily, consistently achieving good Key Stage 2 results and good Ofsted Inspection results.

My apologies to those good schools I have overlooked primarily because of limited contact with them through parents or otherwise.

In the academic year 2013-14, the 19 Kent NS schools inspected by Ofsted achieved an outstanding 79 per cent good or outstanding assessments, way above the national average of 67 per cent. They include eight not even mentioned above: Aylesford; Holmesdale, Snodland; Hugh Christie, Tonbridge; Maplesdon Noakes, Maidstone; Pent Valley, Folkestone; St Anselm's RC Canterbury; and Sittingbourne Community.

Oddly, the request from KoS to prepare this article is the first time ever I am aware of media attention being paid to the good work in so many of Kent's non-selective schools. One has to wonder why?

## Merger consultation ends

THE final parent consultations ahead of the merger of the Marlowe Academy with neighbouring Ellington and Hereson concluded this week.

The merger will be complete in time for September.



## Kent Test dates for 2015

CONFIRMATION is expected by the end of the month for the dates for the Kent Test.

Kent County Council says it will confirm the 11-Plus dates for 2015 by the end of March.

Last year's exam took place on September 10. For details on changes to the Kent Test see page 5.

## Teen snaps up top award

GRETA Gillham Wright, 18, from Simon Langton Girls' Grammar in Canterbury has won the Economic and Social Research Council's Changing World photo competition.

She picked up £100.



## School's consumer crown

WROTHAM School is celebrating after four of its sixth form students won through to the national stages of the Young Consumer of the Year competition.

It beat off stiff competition from a host of other Kent schools in the event run by Kent County Council's Trading Standards.

# Academy pulls plug on plans to push forward primary takeover

By Chris Britcher

[chris.britcher@archant.co.uk](mailto:chris.britcher@archant.co.uk)

**A** LEADING academy trust formally pulled out of a controversial proposal to take over the running of a primary school plunged into special measures last year.

The Twydall Primary School in Gillingham had been told by the Department for Education (DfE) it would be taken over by the Thinking Schools Academy Trust.

But that prompted a backlash from parents who campaigned against it. The school governors rejected the takeover on the grounds it should be allowed to select its own academy sponsor.

It also raised concerns the trust did not have sufficient experience to handle its children with special learning and development needs.

Governor Gary Telfer, in rejecting the proposals in February, had said: "Our school has a renowned provision for children with additional needs, both in learning development and physical disability, "Children travel long distances



**UNCLEAR:** After rejecting the trust's approach, it is not yet clear where Twydall will turn next

to attend our school because of the way it not only educates able-body and physically disabled children together, but those with complex special educational needs too.

"We do not feel the DfE has acted appropriately given the school's unique circumstances."

In a statement issued this week, the trust said: "After much consideration we have decided to formally withdraw from the process

that would have seen Twydall Primary School join the Thinking Schools Academy Trust family.

"School improvement is at the heart of what we do and we have not taken this decision lightly.

"We have however reflected on the length of time it has taken the governing body to proceed in the sponsored academy process. The ongoing delay not only affects the pupils of Twydall, but also affects the pupils of other schools in

Medway who we are supporting and would like to support in the future. We feel we can no longer continue to have our plans in this regard remain on hold indefinitely, during which time Twydall remains in special measures.

"Twydall Primary School remains vulnerable and in need of support, and we are now considering other options to secure the best long term solution for the school."



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# Progress report: Just how are our free schools blending into educational mix?

With more on the way, **Jamie Weir** speaks to two free school heads about the challenges they have faced

**L**OVE them or loathe them, it would appear free schools are here to stay... at least until the general election.

But have they provided a brave new world offering parents greater choice and students wider opportunities as promised by the then education secretary Michael Gove?

Or, instead, have they simply created another tier in an already complicated and crowded education system, putting pressure on neighbouring schools by drawing pupils – and the funding that goes with them – away?

Kent has not been left untouched.

Across the county, a number of free schools have been launched – and just a few weeks ago the Government announced a further two more would open in Kent – one in Maidstone, one in Tonbridge (see box off).

Since they were launched in 2010, a number of this new breed of school – which has more freedom over what is taught, and how – have been opened across the county, with mixed reaction from the public.

So how have the last four to open fared in the first full year of their life?

Wye School, near Ashford, the Hadlow Rural Community School, The Trinity School, in Sevenoaks, and the Wells Free School in Tunbridge Wells, were all opened in time for the start of the academic year in September 2013.

The four all received various levels of public, and political support, when they were first proposed. Now fast approaching the end of their second year, all say they are performing well and are fully subscribed. But it has not been without its challenges.

The Wells School caters to primary school age children in the area – opening on the site of the former Kent and Sussex Hospital in the town centre – an area which is currently being transformed into a residential development. Its head teacher, Ani Lawrence, told KoS that the first year at



**GROWING:** Hadlow Rural Community School has proved a hit with its distinct offering and is already planning to extend its existing buildings

the school had offered challenges, but had been remarkably rewarding.

Mrs Lawrence said: "It has been a steep learning curve, and a huge amount of work, but the first year was tremendous. The school has been extraordinarily well received in the area, and is currently fully subscribed."

Opponents of free schools have said in the past that they draw pupils from existing schools in the area – Kent County Council education chief, Patrick Leeson said the Wye School was in "the wrong place at the wrong time" and may suck potential pupils from existing schools like the Towers in nearby Kennington.

Certainly the figures would tend to bear that out. Last September, saw the Towers fill just 135 of its 243 places.

With its latest Ofsted report declaring Towers as requiring improvement, some could suggest this is market forces at work. But as admission figures dip and funding drops in line with this, it presents a real challenge.

Mrs Lawrence said that was far from the case with the Wells School, telling KoS that the key to the school's success so far had been the genuine need for it in the area.

She said: "Practically speaking, Tunbridge Wells has historically had too few primary schools in the area. This is particularly true of the area which we are based in. Before we opened, most parents in this area would have to shuttle their children to other schools which could be quite a distance.

"We've removed the need for that, and given children a proper local school, which is really important,

**“ We would have to be pretty daft to move too far away from the National Curriculum, even though we can. Our pupils still have to sit the same tests ”**

**Ani Lawrence,**  
Head teacher, The Wells School

That's been a driving force in its success. We're not competing with other schools – instead we're working with other primaries."

Despite having the free school label, Mrs Lawrence says that there isn't a great deal of separation between the Wells School and standard maintained primary schools. She told KoS her school is run along very similar lines to any other primary school.

She said: "We would have to be pretty daft to move too far away from the National Curriculum, even though we can. Our pupils still have to sit the same Key Stage tests that every other child needs to, so it would make no sense to teach anything too different.

"When free schools were first launched one of the big differences was that they were able to set their own term dates. Now almost any school is able to set their own timetable, so that's not a difference either. We're extremely similar to any tradi-

## PM UNVEILS MORE TO COME

EARLIER this month, prime minister David Cameron announced two new free schools for Kent.

A new 420 place primary school will be created in Tonbridge. It will be opened by the Bishop Chavasse Trust which currently runs the Bennett Memorial Diocesan secondary school in Tunbridge Wells.

Alongside it, the Valley Invicta Academies Trust will open a new 800 place specialist science and technology secondary school in Maidstone.

Mr Cameron said: "Delivering the best schools and skills for young people is a crucial part of our long term economic plan to secure a better future for Britain.

"Free schools set up by teachers, parents and community groups are not only outperforming other schools, but they are



**CAMERON:** Free schools are key

raising the performance of those around them, meaning more opportunities for children to learn the skills they need to get on in life."

tional primary school out there in many ways."

Hadlow Rural Community School opened at the same time. It has a unique offering, being a partner of the fast expanding empire created by Hadlow College and offering a slice of the rural curriculum.

Its head teacher, Paul Boxall, told KoS this had made it an attractive prospect to many pupils and their parents.

"We offer something very few other schools offer, with land based activi-

ties that run alongside what the college are doing.

"We also have really small class sizes, and plenty of staff.

"That has proved a real attraction for parents, as every child gets all the support and attention they need in their learning. That's crucial, as academically we really stretch the pupils, with high targets for them to achieve."

The school is already set to grow, with a new building due this year.

## WHAT ARE THEY?

FREE schools are schools which can be set up by an interested party.

These can be groups of parents dissatisfied with the offering which is already available, or teachers, religious groups or any other group.

Unlike traditional schools, although funded by government, they are not under any direct local authority control and have greater freedom. They are able to set their own timetables and deviate from the National Curriculum. They also have greater control over staff recruitment and salaries.



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## Prep school offers a guiding hand

WELLESLEY House headmaster, Simon O'Malley, and his wife, Katy, have been at the helm of this successful boarding prep school since 2006.

With a flurry of recent press articles underlining the pressure on school places now and in the years ahead, they are more determined than ever to help parents find the best school for their child.

"Too often I hear the lament that parents wish they had known about a chosen school sooner, or about the scholarships and bursaries that can bring an excellent education within reach. We hold an annual scholarship identifying academic or sporting potential in children aged seven to nine years. We also look at musical talent. Joining the independent sector at prep level not only gives a child the best possible start, but means you will have expert help through the next stage of schooling where competition for places can be fierce. At Wellesley, we guide our parents as much as our pupils through the steps involved and help ensure that every child achieves their potential."

Best Prep School runner up in the prestigious Tatler School Awards 2014, Wellesley House has been preparing children for the UK's top public schools for almost 150 years. Full boarding is a speciality, but weekly and day options are also popular, with useful day bus routes to help busy parents.

Parents can find out just what makes Wellesley such a happy and successful school by joining the Open Morning on Saturday, May 9. The day is aimed particularly at those interested in entry into Years 3 and 4 and children can try out a range of fun activities. Alternatively, private appointments are available on request at [hmsec@wellesleyhouse.net](mailto:hmsec@wellesleyhouse.net).



**GUIDANCE:** Simon and Katy O'Malley

## Claremont heads to the top of the class

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The school offers a nursery, preparatory, senior and Sixth Form, with a new 50-place boarding facility in Battle opening in September 2015, accommodating both English and international students.

The school also operates an extensive transport service throughout East Sussex and Kent.

In the latest school league table, Claremont Senior School in Bodiam is ranked first amongst all local secondary schools in the Rother District area and third overall in East Sussex.

Some 79 per cent of all students achieved five, or more, A\* to C grades, including English and maths.

Headmaster Giles Perrin said: "We are absolutely delighted to achieve such fantastic results at our first time of asking. It is a testament to the wonderful atmosphere which exists at the school. We expect to now go from strength to strength and this latest success has given the whole school community tremendous confidence."

The school welcome tours and taster days for children of all ages and urges parents to get in touch to arrange a suitable time to visit.



**EXPANDING:** Students at East Sussex site

To arrange an appointment to view the prep school and nursery, call 01424 751555 and for the senior school and Sixth Form, call 01580 830396. Alternatively, visit the school's website at [www.claremontschool.co.uk](http://www.claremontschool.co.uk) for more information.

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# Get the guide to boost your grades

**A** 'WAR on innumeracy' has been declared by the government - and one UK publisher has launched a series of 'how-to' maths workbooks that could help win the battle.

AE Publications (AEP), based in south-west London, has published a series of maths workbooks and testbooks aimed at accelerating the learning of primary school-aged children.

The books, written by former state school teacher and National Curriculum expert Stephen Curran, take children back to the traditional basics of education.

Stephen, who owns AE Publications and has been an advisor to the government on changes to the National Curriculum, says, politics aside, there is a growing need to improve the basic skills of primary school children, and support can begin at home.

"Too many children are leaving primary school not even knowing the basics," Stephen said.

"If every child is given the basics then they can tackle all the next steps in education. It is when they don't know the basics that they flounder at secondary school level.

"Young children need structure in their learning, it is how they learn best. More traditional methods give them that structure and a firm



**EXPERT:** Stephen Curran and his range of books to help boost key skills

foundation for learning."

Education secretary Nicky Morgan announced new targets, which include 11-year-olds taking a test on the 12 times tables and tackling long division and complex multiplication.

AEP's maths workbooks and testbooks take children from Year 3 age up to Year 7 on a step-by-step method of working that becomes

progressively more challenging.

By the time they have reached the last book in the series they will be at Level 5 or 6 standard - above average and exceptionally above average - for Key Stage Two SATs, the national tests for Year 6 pupils.

The books, which start at £9.50, also reflect changes in the maths National Curriculum, introduced last

September. That new curriculum requires all nine-year-olds to know their times tables with more algebra and fractions introduced.

AEP has also produced two additional times tables books to help children learn their two to 12 (first book) and even their 13 to 20 times tables (second book). These include helpful progress charts and 48

flash cards to make it fun to do.

Stephen added: "I launched AE Publications because of a growing demand from parents to see their children succeed at school. Our publications are 'how-to' books that equip children with all the techniques they need to excel not just in tests, but in all the school work they are given.

"They are designed so that the child can work side-by-side with their parents at home.

"While there continues to be a significant number of children not reaching the standard for their age, books like ours combined with support at home will play an instrumental part in helping children to succeed."

Nicky Morgan, says she wants England's schools to be the best in Europe in English and maths by 2020.

Currently the UK is ranked 23rd for reading and 26th in maths in international league tables - and a third of children are leaving primary school unable to read, write or add up properly.

Schools are expected to get 65 per cent of pupils up to a good standard - and this target is set to rise to 85 per cent. In addition to the maths workbooks, AE Publications produces a range of workbooks covering English, verbal activity and non-verbal reasoning.

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# How Hadlow planted seeds of recovery after the chaos of K College merger

West Kent College is back and balancing the books following its take over. **Jamie Weir** looks at its revival

**J**UST five years ago, amid much fanfare and brand new, vibrant corporate branding, West Kent College ceased to be and K College was born in its place.

It came to the rescue of the struggling South Kent College, taking it into its warm embrace and merging its sites in Ashford, Dover and Folkestone with its existing bases in Tunbridge Wells and its spiritual home at Brook Street, Tonbridge. It became Kent's biggest single educational institution.

It promised a broad offering, top class facilities and a future.

It delivered a calamitous three years which saw it slump into financial meltdown, set a fine example in poor management and a failure to make the sums all add up.

In September 2014, amid yet another branding overhaul, West Kent College was back. This time in a rather more modest manner.

Like a phoenix from the flames, it shook free its coastal cousins, and re-emerged focusing purely on its Brook Street site; a site which over the last ten years had been almost completely rebuilt.

Once again, it welcomed the next generation promising to put them on the road to prosperity.

This time, you feel, there's every chance it will deliver.

And its saviour is a college whose recent past lends the perfect example of how futures can be transformed through modest growth and sound management. Enter Hadlow College.

In 2004, Hadlow College was in trouble. It was slated for a merger itself.

The agricultural college had been failing for some time, with financial mismanagement rife and standards slipping to the point that government had deemed it a 'failed institution', earmarking it for closure.

Back then, ironically, West Kent College had been pondering taking Hadlow over.

The complete role reversal was complete within the decade.

Hadlow has gone from a failing college with an annual turnover of just £4 million, to being rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted and seeing a turnover of around £44 million.

The man in charge of finances, and arguably the reason for the dramatic transformation of Hadlow College is Mark Lumsdon-Taylor. He told KoS that the experiences which Hadlow had were fundamental in guiding the principles it would use to turn the former K College around.

Mr Lumsdon-Taylor says that the key to transforming West Kent College and Ashford College – the two parts of K College which Hadlow was chosen to take over – is getting the money part of the equation right. Without this, he says, you can forget the rest.

He said: "West Kent College and



**HEALTHY:** The Brook Street campus in Tonbridge is now back on the right road after three years of problems under the K College banner

Ashford College were in a really rocky state when we began to scrutinise the accounts. In fact, the accounts hadn't been signed off by auditors for three years, because they simply couldn't be sure if the figures were all correct. They were qualified accounts – that means that auditors simply couldn't be sure of the facts.

"That was the situation we were dealing with. We had to ensure that no stone was left unturned when we were thinking about acquiring them as it was crucial we knew all of the problems to make sure we had sufficient strategy and financing in place."

The parlous state that the college's former managers had left it in meant it was a gamble taking it on. But Mr Lumsdon-Taylor had confidence the solutions Hadlow had already used to sort itself out would be able to fix the problems at the former K College sites.

But given the scale of the issue – the K College accounts were in debt to the tune of at least £17m at the time of collapse, with the situation so bad the Government had been forced to parachute in specialist advisors to immediately tackle the college's day-to-day finances – is there not an issue that Hadlow could be dragged down should it fail to transform West Kent and Ashford College's fortunes?

"We spent quite some time renegotiating the substantial debts which K College had built up," explains Lumsdon-Taylor. "We worked closely with the Skills Funding Agency and the bank to ensure we were able to arrive at an affordable solution. We looked at how, from an audit perspective, the organisations have separate financials. We separated the institute legally so funding is separated and

**“ The colleges have gone through a robust reorganisation to stabilise. We now need to deliver on milestones for growth and employment ”**

**Mark Lumsdon-Taylor,**  
Finance director, Hadlow College

Hadlow is protected. One of the financial pillars I brought to Hadlow when I first came here was a desire to diversify funding streams."

Rather than simply being dependant on government funding, when Mr Lumsdon-Taylor joined Hadlow he looked to other areas to make sure money was coming into the college. That self-sufficiency – and the resilience it brings – is core to Mr Lumsdon-Taylor's philosophy.

He said: "I thought it was key to ensure we didn't have all of our funding eggs in one basket. Getting a balanced stream of funding is important. At Hadlow we are now around 35 per cent commercially funded, which enables us to not only help fund the college but also to ensure our students are commercially minded."

That, says Mr Lumsdon-Taylor helps to raise standards across the board – and quality underpins the strategy to take West Kent College and Ashford College forward.

He said: "Quality and high standards are crucial for both



**FINANCE:** Mark Lumsdon-Taylor

of the colleges going forward.

"It's critically important to get that right from the start and because of that, we have a three year aggressive growth plan which hinges on improving quality."

The plan also means creating strong separate identities around each of the separate institutions, with the Hadlow Group acting as the umbrella organisation which controls Hadlow College, West Kent College and Ashford College.

Mr Lumsdon-Taylor said: "It was felt that it was important to keep the Hadlow brand separate from the two new colleges. We have decided to return West Kent College and Ashford College back to their traditional brand colours, and help them to regain their own character to attract students."

Although cagey about naming companies involved, both colleges have signed "in principle" agreements for



**BRAND:** West Kent College is back

"long term" private investment.

These deals, says Mr Lumsdon-Taylor, will give the two colleges cash injections.

"The colleges have gone through a robust reorganisation to stabilise the business. We now need to deliver on milestones for growth and employment" explains Mr Lumsdon-Taylor.

He continued: "Already the situation is getting better. West Kent and Ashford colleges have a combined turnover of around £24m.

"We are already projected to make a small surplus of around £250,000 this year. And we have managed to secure an unqualified audit – where the auditor is able to sign off the accounts.

"That is a big statement already, as it gives potential pupils, staff and investors confidence that the organisation is stable."





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**FEMALE** 42, looking for a medium build man, ns, 43-51yrs old, honest, loyal, genuine, good so. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4642791

**GENTLEMAN** are there any of you left out there? I am seeking romantic honest n/s male to share odd nights out/soy nights in. I am a 51yr old Mum. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4505863

**MELANIE** energetic young 45, seeks intelligent, understanding man to share exciting nights out and intimate nights in, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416705

**SOPHIA** young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel No: 0905 002 1883 Box No: 413399

**JENNY** 44, attractive, slim and vivacious, would love to be seduced by an attractive, genuine, loving guy. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416697

**ADVENTUROUS** sexy lady, 38yrs, married but seeks no strings fun with discreet man, any age. I'm tall, slim and dominant. Aca. Tel No: 0905 002 1937 Box No: 415301

**LYN** 41, beautiful blonde, sexy green eyes, wicked and vivacious, seeks tall well built male to share wine, lots of laughter and naughtiness! Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416679

**MELANIE** 41, very attractive, sensual, curvy blonde, girl of many dreams seeks, outgoing, professional male for intimate evening in and fun nights out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416491

**ANNE** mid 40's, cheerful busty curvy affectionate real woman! Seeks gent, any age or looks for nights at mine. Tel No: 0905 002 1953 Box No: 410291

**CHRISTINE** affectionate tactile blonde, likes cosy pubs, seeks romantic good-looking older guy to get to know and see what the future brings. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416673

**DISCREET** lady, 42yrs wants to make you happy, come to me and let me do that for you. Aca. Tel No: 0905 002 1957 Box No: 409091

**KERRY** 39, curvy brunette, sensual, tactile, seeks cheeky, spontaneous guy to keep her company and make her smile again. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416599

**TARA**, confident lady, long legs, long hair, seeks a saucy man of any age for daytime, no strings fun. Tel No: 0905 002 1913 Box No: 414701

**GILL** tactile, brunette, seeks very tall, well-built male who's looking for an uncomplicated relationship with a real woman. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416593

**TRACY**, 36yrs, hubble away on the rigs dec/jan, seeks discreet fun with clean chap any age. Text Only Box No: 4590837

**ALISON** 39, petite with long brown hair, hazel eyes, very loving, seeking similar male for an uncomplicated relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416517

**JANET**, new to area, mid 40's loves to chat and gossip with interesting men. Text Only Box No: 4646626

**MARINA** cuddly blonde, blue eyes, kind, caring, loyal, down to earth, lonely girl. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414627

**LIZ** petite curvy, bubbly brunette seeks sensitive, sincere male who would like to put his feet up, share cosy nights in and see what follows. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416505

**CAROLINE**, caring nurse, late 30's brunette, doesn't get much time to socialise. Text Only Box No: 4646627

**THERE'S** more to life than work! Sandra, 46, bubbly professional looking to let her hair down with broadminded male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416503

**BEV**, life and soul with a naughty side, loves banter and saucy chat. Text Only Box No: 4646628

**ALISON** 30, pretty, slim with long brown hair, fit and active seeks fit older male for energetic relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416497

**TARA**, 32, own successful business but very shy and lonely seeks confident chap. Text Only Box No: 4646629

**DEBORAH** 41, intelligent brunette, lovely brown eyes, discreet, many interests, seeks similar male to share fun and good conversation. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416515

**KULBIR**, asian lady, seeks discreet white man who appreciates ladies. Text Only Box No: 4646633

**CLARE**, 29, works abroad but back for a few weeks, seeking new men friends. Text Only Box No: 4646634

**JACKIE** 32, attractive professional, very smart and feminine, long brown hair, seeks smart, confident, older male who knows how to treat a lady. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416297

**ALICE**, 52, married, loves younger men for flirts and laughs. Text Only Box No: 4646635

**JUDY** youthful slim nurse 45, no ties, can't wait to raise the temperature of a discreet, experienced, confident guy. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416291

**BECKY** 23, classy blonde, long blonde hair, blue eyes seeks loving older guy to spoil and pamper her. Discretion assured/guaranteed. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416233

**TINA** 50, attractive with long dark hair, hopeless romantic, seeks loving male for lots of TLC. Looks important, it's what is in the heart that matters. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416227

**LINDA** 26, cheeky, curvy brunette, a little shy at first, likes to look after herself, seeks dark haired male for discreet naughty but fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416195

**BEV** 41, gorgeous, bored, green eyed blonde, looking for fun nights in or out with discreet man who can turn a spark into a fire. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416187

**TERESA** 39, petite, cuddly and bubbly seeks kind older male to travel, have fun, and take care of, pamper and flirt with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416081

**LUCY** stunning tall brunette, looking for exciting times, seeks like-minded, adventurous male who is willing to try anything once or maybe even twice! Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416079

**PETITE** blonde, blue eyes, very feminine and sensual seeks younger male for friendship and discreet fun. Can accommodate. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416077

**HEATHER** 38, gorgeous, tall, slim, long curly hair, WLTm tactile, romantic guy. I've made the first move, now the rest is up to you. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416063

**AMANDA** sexy affectionate brunette, green eyes, busty, seeks caring older male who can keep up with her vivacious nature and be loved in return. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416061

**ANGIE** attractive nurse 39yrs, new to area/advertising, likes dog walking, being sociable, meals in/out, WLTm honest, fun male for possible ltr. looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415827

**LINDA** 48, caring, honest, GSOH, looking for love and romance, possible LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414301

**ADELE** curvy fun loving brunette, 24, green eyes, eager to please, seeks hunky male for fun times and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416059

**PAULA** 46, single mum, kind hearted, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416053

**SARAH** 29yr old pretty slim single mum of one, interesting, lively, good fun, enjoys nights in/out, music, seeking similar easy going, genuine, honest man/dad to get to know. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415841

**SONIA** attractive slim young 42yr old female looking for romantic man, 39-50 with similar interests and a GSOH for meals out, theatre and hopeful LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415835

**JEAN** 19yr old tanned toned female looking for adult fun, no ties. Call me, you won't regret it. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415825

**LINDA** 48, caring, honest, GSOH, looking for love and romance, possible LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414301

**MIKE** 65, 5ft 8ins, medium build, clean-shaven, seeking adult day time fun with attractive discreet female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414331

**PROFESSIONAL** male, 60, educated, slim, discreet, seeks sensual, feminine lady, any age/status for fun and friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414121

**ATTRACTIVE** mature, clean male, seeks nice clean, slim lady for relaxed, no hurried stress relieving massage. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413957

**WAYNE** 50, fit, seeking evening/weekend fun with female, can be discreet. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413321

**MARVIN** mid 50's, black, tall, easy going, fun, N/S, likes to work hard and play hard, seeks white female, N/S with similar interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413221

**GAVIN** mid 30's, affluent, debonair, silly, fun, looking for someone a little bit naughty. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412979

**TONY** cheeky, lively, youthful, solvent, N/S, 5ft 8ins, no ties, seeks like minded female for fun and travel. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412443

**MIKE** 50's, genuine, slim, 5ft 8ins, brown hair, seeks honest, understanding local lady, 45-60, N/S for friendship and fun times. Chichester. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413683

**SFT** 2ins male, 10st, medium build, likes pubs, cycling, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413761

**REASONABLY** attractive male, 5ft 9ins, 52, average build, brown hair, blue eyes, seeks younger, well spoken, N/S Sussex female for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413561

**51YR** old Asian male, 5ft 7ins, self employed, honest, looking for genuine relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414901

**MALE** naughty 40's, seeks female, 25-60 for daytime fun, no strings in West Sussex. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414825

**EASY** going male, various interests, understanding, romantic, seeks female, 20-50 for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414807

**ROB** 38, seeks female, 33-50 for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414637

**ANDREW** 39, 5ft 10ins, green eyes, brown hair, outgoing, likes books, music, pubs, good times, walks, seeks female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414603

**LEE** seeking female for friendship with benefits. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414539

**GARETH** handsome 40's pilot, strong tall build, seeks daytime discreet passion with lady 30-65. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414421

**PAUL** 51, likes meals out, music, weekends away, seeking female to share fun times with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413479

**EASY** going friendly male, 5ft 10ins, slim, loves to please, seeks feminine female, age unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413389

**HANDSOME** Caribbean black man, looking for loving, compatible female, giving for nights out, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412891

**JOHN** 62, patient, relaxed, easy going, seeking platonic friendship with lady of any age in the Ryde area, many interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412753

**HANDSOME** fit fireman, 5ft 10ins, 45, seeks discreet, passionate, bored female of any age. Surrey/Sussex/Kent. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411939

**55YR** old male, kind hearted, caring, laidback, house trained, seeking romance and love. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411897

**KEN** 67, slim, N/S, Harley/chopper rider, seeks petite, slim, long haired, quiet spoken, N/S woman for pillow and LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411609

**ROBERT** blue eyes, 5ft 9ins, slim, loving, caring, easy going, likes swimming, walks, cinema, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411487

**HANDSOME** male, 5ft 10ins, fun, intelligent, strong, slim, seeks Surrey/Sussex/Kent female, younger or mature in years for discreet fun and passion. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411191

**RETIRE** 69yr old male, likes travel, meals out, yoga, OFAC, seeks female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411121

**MARK** 60, blue eyes, 5ft 11ins, financially secure, fair to good looking, WLTm normal female, 50-60 for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410987

**FRIENDLY** old man, less than 60, seeks friendly female, any age for fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411733

**RETIRED** young looking 65yr old divorced male, likes food, socialising, seeking nice girl. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411095



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**ARMY TRAINING:**  
Jungle instruction for  
2nd Battalion, Princess of  
Wales's Royal Regiment



# County's regiment gets intensive training in perils of jungle warfare

As part of their preparation work to ensure they are ready to spring into action as needed in any part of the world, the regiment once based at Canterbury's Howe Barracks jetted out to central America

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

**S**OLDIERS from across the county serving in the 2nd Battalion, Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment have swapped their base on a Mediterranean island for the hot and steamy jungle.

The troops are currently based at Dhekelia on Cyprus, but left that behind in exchange for the hot and steamy jungles of the tiny central American country of Belize as they take part in Exercise Mayan Warrior – designed to sharpen their skills in some of the world's most inhospitable climates.

Formally British Honduras, Belize nestles in between the southern border of Mexico and Guatemala, looking out towards the Gulf of Mexico. A mecca for environmental tourism, its jungles and coral reef, second only in size to the Great Barrier Reef, attracts thousands of backpackers and scuba divers.

The jungle training exercise gives the troops from A company the chance to learn how to fight in the jungle and how to navigate and survive amidst the dangers that lurk beneath its verdant canopy.

The battalion's two other rifle companies, B and C will be training in the Middle East and the Falkland Islands

in order to broaden the depth of knowledge and skill in operating worldwide.

An MoD spokesman said: "Many a military veteran will tell you, 'if you can overcome living and fighting in the jungle, you'll pretty much manage anywhere else'.

"It is renowned as the harshest environment to get to grips with. The difficulties of just looking after yourself is magnified ten-fold. In the jungle you forego the pleasures of soap or any perfumed toiletries; not only are you expected to visually blend in with the jungle with camouflage, but also with its smells. Such is the intensity of the environment that any alien odour can literally carry for thousands of metres giving your position away. Shaving is out of the question, any nick or cut runs the risk of a potentially life-threatening infection.

"In short, the soldier has to become as one with their environment; all this is before you start confronting the myriad of parasites, ticks, malaria bearing mosquitos, spiders – tarantulas among others – scorpions and snakes all intent on either biting, stinging or otherwise feasting on you.

"Navigating through the jungle is slow, exhausting and fraught with difficulties. The dense canopy precludes the use of sat-nav systems and can also interfere with radio transmission, you can hardly see more than a few metres ahead through the thick un-

dergrowth and, of course, there are no topographical features to help.

"The ground under foot is steep and muddy causing many to stumble and fall; those who do naturally reach and grab anything available to steady themselves. It is not for their endearing qualities that trees in these parts are aptly nick named 'b\*\*tard trees'. They have four-inch-plus sharp spines protruding from their trunks heralding many a soldier to curse loudly, giving them their name, as he picks the

spines out of his bleeding, and now potentially infected hand."

Speaking at the midway point through his 48-hour jungle survival experience Private Matt Boughton, 29, a former pupil at Deal's Castle Community College, and father-of-four, said: "I'm very excited to be here. I did an exercise in Kenya not so long ago – so I got really lucky.

"I helped to get the fire going by using a flint and steel showering sparks onto dry plant fibres – it's such a mo-

rale booster to get a good fire going.

"We went out into the undergrowth to collect rattan and bamboo to build a shelter, which we had been shown how to do.

"During the night, we heard the loud bellowing cry of the howler monkeys calling out and a few jungle rats scurrying about, you do get a bit twitchy at night."

The troops will return to their usual base, Dhekelia in Cyprus at the beginning of next month.





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GO ON: Give vinyl another go

# Limited edition treats ahead of Record Store Day extravaganza

The way we buy music has changed dramatically over the last 20 years, leading to the death of the record shop on many of our high streets. But one annual event continues to generate huge interest

By Chris Murphy  
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

**N**OT so long ago, every town centre boasted shops dedicated to selling music.

From small independent traders, with walls decked in promotional posters, picture discs and shaped vinyl, showcasing rack upon rack of seven and 12-inch singles and albums, to the big chain stores, they were a staple of the high street.

Not only were there dedicated retailers, the big chains all had special sections too – Boots, WHSmith, John Menzies, Woolworths – all jostled for positions as vinyl sales peaked around the mid 1980s.

And if that wasn't enough, for many no trip to London was complete without a tour of the so-called megastores – the likes of Virgin, HMV and Tower Records.

But gradually at first – and then with rude acceleration – the landscape started to change in line with our habits. The transformation from vinyl to CDs changed the face of many retailers' approach to sales, especially when the supermarkets joined the market – bulk buying and undercutting their rivals.

It may not have packed any of the experience of going into a cluttered record shop... but if you could do so at a fraction of the cost, it became a game changer.

By the time restrictions were put in place to prevent the flood of limited edition and multiple formats of singles in order to keep a level playing field, the

writing was on the wall. The digital revolution dealt the final fatal blow.

But the romance of the record store continues to fascinate. And next month (April 18) sees national Record Store Day return once again – a now annual event, born in the USA in 2007 – which aims to remind music lovers of the sheer delight of a trip to their local store.

Record labels and artists unite to release a host of limited edition collectibles – this year's roster includes the likes of special products from David Bowie, The Beatles, the Foo Fighters, Metallica and Bon Jovi.

The special editions will all be pressed on vinyl – once the number one format, and one still cherished by many. None can be reserved – all are served up on a strict first-come-first-served basis.

Such is its impact now, the single day is thought to account for around 12 per cent of all vinyl sold in the UK.

Independent stores in Kent hope it will once again bring fresh faces to their stores.

Alison Wressell has run Vintage and Vinyl in The Old High Street, Folkestone, since August. She told us: "We are hoping to get some new customers who become regulars.

"The albums are a little dearer these days, but when you compare them to the 1980s when they were £7 or £8, they do seem a bit of a bargain these days, and of course you get the full quality and experience.

"This will be the first time we have participated. It costs £60 to register and then ordering stock can cost thousands, so those that take part take a bit chance.

"I am confident we will do well. I en-

joy listening to vinyl and I think it's sad some youngsters today have got out of the habit of actually sitting down and properly listening to music.

"We are determined to fight back – I would challenge anyone who has never heard a record play to come in and see what they are missing. For that reason, I think stores like mine will be around for years."

Vinyl continues to enjoy something of a revival. But, in comparison to the main way in which music is consumed, it is now very much a minority player.

Martin Talbot, managing director of the Official Charts Company, said: "In an era when we're all talking about digital music, the fact that these

beautiful physical artefacts are still as popular as they are is fantastic.

"It's really remarkable. We're seeing it come back as a significant earner for the music industry as well."

Just half a decade ago, it was worth £3m a year – today in excess of £20m.

But they command top prices – chart topping releases command a vinyl price tag of around £15-25. Compared with online prices around half that. Not to mention the power of streaming services such as Spotify.

Illustrating the fragile nature of the music market, last year, Chatham's Manny's Music was part of Record Store Day, but this year has vanished from the high street after 14

years in a variety of guises.

Oz Eastman has run the long-running B'Side the C'Side in Herne Bay for 18 months, and jumped at the chance to take part this year.

He told us: "It's good to see the youngsters come along to the shop looking for their new vinyl. I am mad on the stuff and want to see a return of the traditional record shop.

"The quality is better and the packaging is just so much more exciting, vibrant and informative than CD cases, let alone downloads where you get nothing."

He added: "There was another record shop near us, but they have closed down now – it is such a shame."

## FROM BOWIE TO FOO FIGHTERS – THIS YEAR'S SPECIALS

RECORD Store Day has become a popular day for retailers and music fans – pandering to the desire to grab a piece of rare memorabilia from some of the biggest names.

The event started in 2007 in the US with a mission to revive independent stores' fortunes. Today it does exactly the same here.

Explains a spokesman for the organisers: "This is the one day that all of the independently owned record stores come together with artists to celebrate the art of music. Special vinyl and CD releases and promotional products are made exclusively for the day, and hundreds of artists across the globe make special appearances and performances.

"Festivities include perform-

ances, meet and greets with artists, DJs and on and on."

This year there will be 26 titles released specially for the occasion. Leading the way with new material, Mumford and Sons will be teasing fans with a seven-inch single containing two unreleased tracks from their hotly anticipated new record Wilder Mind.

The Foo Fighters will also release an exclusive 10-inch of Songs from the Laundry Room, with never before heard tracks and demos. There's also a special seven-inch release from former Smiths star Johnny Marr as he takes on Depeche Mode's I Feel You.

Continuing the 40th anniversary of the seven-inch picture disc series, David Bowie returns with

an exclusive release of Changes. The Small Faces also have four exclusive releases including an alternate single mix of Afterglow Of Your Love.

There are also live discs from Suede and Ocean Colour Scene as they each release a 12-inch, with Dog Man Star live at the Royal Albert Hall and OCS live at The Bridgewater hall with Q Strings.

Among the more niche and rare on the list is the official re-issue of the Northern Soul classic Do I Love You (Indeed I Do) seven-inch single by Frank Wilson which is notoriously worth thousands in its original format.

For more information, see the [www.recordstoreday.co.uk](http://www.recordstoreday.co.uk).





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**AUTHENTIC:**  
The play will chart  
the humble  
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career of the  
iconic duo.

## Insight into 'elusive' Simon and Garfunkel in new show

Production features pictures and authentic film footage from the 1960s...

**F**IVE decades after the most successful folk rock duo of all time recorded their hit single The Sound of Silence, a show celebrating their impressive career will be performed in Bromley.

Following its West End success, The Simon and Garfunkel Show will be coming to The Churchill Theatre on April 4.

Featuring a cast of talented actors and musicians, the show takes the audience back to the 1960s and charts the story of Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel as they rise to fame.

It tells the tale of their humble beginnings as duo Tom and Jerry, their massive success and dramatic break-up.

The show finishes with a recreation of their 1981 Central Park concert.

Using a large projection screen,

the production features photos and film footage from the 1960s.

A full live band will be performing classic hits including Mrs Robinson, Cecilia, Bridge Over Troubled Water, The Sound Of Silence and Homeward Bound.

Award-winning Dean Elliott, who has previously starred in the West End show Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story, will be taking on the role of Paul Simon.

A fan of Simon and Garfunkel's music, he is really looking forward to it.

He will be joined on stage by Jonny Smart, who will play the role of Art Garfunkel.

Mr Elliott, who is also one of the show's creators, said: "It's an incredible journey. The show is beautiful, I can see why it's done so well. People have really enjoyed it.

"It was fuelled by my love of their

music, their vocals blend together – there's just nothing like it. I think the sound of it is so beautiful."

The show enjoyed its West End success at London's Leicester Square theatre in February.

"It's great. It's been a rollercoaster the last year," said Mr Elliott.

He added that he hoped the show would provide the audience with an insight into the lives of the legendary musicians.

"They are quite elusive characters. I don't think people know a lot about them," he explained.

"They know their music and that's it, but we allow the audience into their world.

"Someone once asked me 'were they friends?' and it was one of those unanswered questions of rock and roll.

"We thought – that's an interesting starting point, let's try and

answer that and let's talk about their story and their music. I think a lot of people don't know about their early lives."

The performance is also aiming to give some insight into the 1960s, the era when Simon and Garfunkel were performing.

"People's opinions of things shifted somewhat in that decade," said Mr Elliott.

"We wanted to really give the show some perspective."

The film footage that is shown during the show has helped with this.

He added: "We show old footage and old adverts. On top of that we can talk about some of the more serious aspects.

"We talk about Vietnam, the problems with integration and teenage optimism."

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# Amnesty award-winning show by elder statesman of comedy

By Maria Chiorando

maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk

**F**OLLOWING yet another sell-out Edinburgh Fringe run, the man described as one of comedy's 'elder statesmen' continues his eighth nationwide tour – Cuckooed – with a story about betrayal.

Mark Thomas tells the true story of how Britain's biggest arms manufacturer, BAE Systems, came to spy on him in this tale of hubris, planes, demos and undercover deceit.

The comedian, who is also an author, political satirist and reporter, came to the public's attention in the late 1980s as a guest comic on comedy radio show The Mary Whitehouse Experience.

He went on to work on a number of television productions, including The Mark Thomas Comedy Project, which ran for six series.

In 2012, his first ever one-man theatre piece, Bravo Figaro – commissioned by the Royal Opera House about his opera-loving father – sold out its fringe run, and won him a Herald Angel award, and his first Scotsman Fringe First.



**PROBING:** The comic often questions the establishment in his work.

Credit: Idil Sukan Draw

The piece was recently broadcast on BBC Radio 4.

With Cuckooed, his second theatre piece, he was awarded the Amnesty International Freedom of Expression award, which is given to an 'outstanding play at the Edinburgh Festival carrying a human rights message'.

Mr Thomas said it was 'a very inspiring experience and I feel very humbled'.

The comedian has courted controversy throughout his career, walking the entire length of the Israeli wall in the West Bank for one documentary, taking the police to court over surveillance and finding a new definition for the word 'Farage'.

He has also investigated Coca-Cola, and inheritance tax avoidance, as well as having given evidence to Westminster select

committees and having been arrested countless times all in the name of his work.

He's published three books and a manifesto, and is a regular contributor to political magazine The New Statesman.

Mark Thomas brings Cuckooed to Folkestone's Quarterhouse on April 24.

For details, or to buy tickets, visit [www.quarterhouse.co.uk](http://www.quarterhouse.co.uk).

## Hitting the right jazz notes

JAZZ band the Roller Trio will be playing at the Ramsgate Music Hall on March 26, with doors opening at 7.30 pm. Tickets cost £11.

To buy tickets, visit [www.wegotickets.com](http://www.wegotickets.com).



## Murder is big Deal in Kent

DEAL Noir, a new crime fiction conference in Kent, has been announced featuring some of the UK's most popular crime fiction authors.

The event will be staged at The Landmark Centre in Deal on March 28. To book, or for enquiries, go to [www.dealnoir.wordpress.com](http://www.dealnoir.wordpress.com).

Tickets cost £12.50.

## Joker Joe's Margate trip

COMEDIAN Joe Pasquale will be performing at the Theatre Royal Margate on August 18 at 7.30pm.

Tickets cost £17.50 or £14 for a restricted view.

To book, call 01843 292795.



## Catch Reginald D Hunter

FOLLOWING a successful year of filming and performing around the world, comedian Reginald D Hunter is now embarking on a new tour.

He will be performing at the Central Theatre, Chatham, on June 7.

For more information or to book, call 01634 338 338 or visit [www.tickets.medway.gov.uk](http://www.tickets.medway.gov.uk)

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## Riviera of Flowers & Gardens, Monaco & Portofino by Rail - afternoon departure - 1 June, 2015

7 days half board plus, **£849pp** • Quote: FF6-KOS

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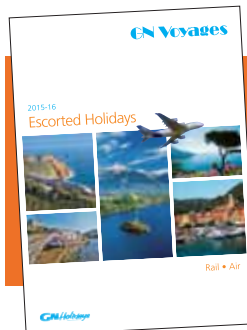
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Come with us on a charming break taking in the spectacular Zundert Flower Parade and Antwerp. The parade is made up of breathtaking displays entirely created by volunteers using dahlias - the largest of its kind in the world. Many of them are animated, giving a truly realistic appearance. The town is also renowned as the birth place of Vincent Van Gogh. Antwerp, Belgium's second biggest city, is our base for this break and is a true architectural wonder.

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## Bavaria & The Sound of Music Country by Rail - afternoon departure - 6 May, 2015

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**INCLUDED:** Escorted throughout • Champagne Check-in at London St Pancras • Return rail travel from St Pancras (from Ebbsfleet on request) to Chiemsee • 1 night hotel B&B in Paris • 5 nights 3-star half board hotel in Priem am Chiemsee • All excursions • Transfers abroad



Champagne  
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## Barcelona & The Wild Coast by Rail - Departures: 2015, 22 Sept; 2016, 17 May, 20 June & 18 Sept

8 days, **£949pp** • Quote: IB9-KOS

Barcelona has so much to offer - unique Gaudi architecture, including the famous Sagrada de Familia basilica; lovely parks, squares, boulevards, shops, art, beaches, and delicious cuisine. Spain's legendary Costa Brava, or Wild Coast is dotted with fishing villages, pine forested coves, sheer cliffs and pristine beaches. We stay in the quaint fishing village of Tossa de Mar, a hidden gem of the area, and include a boat trip along the stunning coastline. We also visit Figueres and Barcelona. Travel is by Eurostar from London with an overnight in Paris and a swift train to the Mediterranean.

**INCLUDED:** Escorted throughout • Champagne check-in at London St Pancras • Return Eurostar & TGV rail travel from St Pancras to Barcelona (from Ebbsfleet on request) • 1 night hotel B&B in Paris • 6 nights half-board stay at a 4 star hotel in Tossa de Mar • Excursions as stated • Transfers abroad



# James Martin: Chefs should be about the food

TV chef and cook book author talks about why so many of today's young chefs just want to be on TV...

**D**ON'T get James Martin started on the number of chefs trying to get on TV at the moment.

Yes, he may be a chef, and yes he may be on telly a fair bit, but he's also rather fed up with seeing members of his profession clambering for their close-ups.

"Fundamentally, I'm doing something I love," reasons the Malton-born 42-year-old.

"I never wanted to be on television, I didn't go into this industry to be on TV.

"Unfortunately now, most chefs when you ask the younger ones, well, they just want to be on TV. It's not about that."

The statement seems to contradict Martin's own TV engagements, in-

cluding Saturday Kitchen and the second series of Home Comforts, filmed at his home and based on his new book of the same name. He also appeared on Ready, Steady, Cook, as well as a number of other shows.

But he insists his career is built on a rocksteady love of food.

"The industry is so important to me first, and the TV is secondary," he adds.

"I just so happen to be doing this because I was told I was good at it, and that's why the phone kept ringing.

"I'd be quite happy if the filming stopped. I'll go back to my restaurant."

But it doesn't sound like the chatty chef is in a rush to leave the



**ORIGINAL:** James Martin was one of the first TV chefs

small screen anytime very soon.

Having taken part in BBC One's Meet The Street, where he took famous people back to their hometowns to tackle loneliness in their area, he is evangelical about the power of telly.

"I just think TV is such a magical thing, as in it can change people's lives and make you cry, make you happy," explains Martin.

The chef, who also hosted BBC One's Operation Hospital Food, which saw him working to improve meals served up in wards.

"It's an amazing thing, really," he says. "The more I do it, the more I enjoy it. I've been doing it for 20 years now and it's just the best job in the world... but then I always want my other job."

And it's his "other job" – writing recipes (especially ones which cater for people who live "north of Watford" and include ingredients everyone should be able to track down easily), or working at his Manchester restaurant – that really gets him buzzing.

That's what he really enjoys.

"I go back to my kitchen for normality, that's my day job," says Martin, who came fourth in the third series of Strictly Come Dancing.

But he loves the chance to "dive in and out", and travel the country meeting foodies for work.

"Meeting people is fascinating," he says.

"Whatever they do, wherever they're from, whatever they've got, people are fascinating."

## Quo Rockin' Rochester

**ROCKERS** Status Quo will play at Rochester Castle Gardens on July 15. Status Quo members Francis Rossi and Rick Parfitt have been working the crowds for more than 50 years and are looking forward to performing again in one of their favourite intimate venues.

Tickets go on sale on March 23 at 10am, visit [www.thecastleconcerts.co.uk](http://www.thecastleconcerts.co.uk) or call 01634 338338.

## Boy in Striped Pyjamas

**THE MARLOWE** Theatre in Canterbury will host a production of The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas.

The play, which is based on the best-selling novel by John Boyne, comes to the city from March 25 to 28.

Tickets cost between £15 and £30.50.

For more information, visit [www.marlowetheatre.com](http://www.marlowetheatre.com). You can also call the box office on 01227 787787.

## Sooty, Sweep and Soo

**CHILDREN'S** favourite The Sooty Show is coming to Bromley's Churchill Theatre next month.

The puppets – Sooty, Sweep and Soo – will be performing on April 3, with two shows at 11am and 2.30pm.

Tickets cost £16.90 plus a booking fee.

For more information, and to buy tickets, you can visit the website at [www.atgtickets.com](http://www.atgtickets.com) or call 0844 871 7620.

## Full Monty at Orchard

**THE STAGE** version of hit film The Full Monty will come to Dartford's Orchard Theatre from April 20-25.

The show has songs from the film by Donna Summer, Hot Chocolate and Tom Jones, and stars The Bill and Footballers' Wives' favourite Gary Lucy.

For more information, visit [www.orchardtheatre.co.uk](http://www.orchardtheatre.co.uk) or call the box office on 01322 220000.

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We are delighted to announce the launch of the Kent Life and Kent on Sunday Food & Drink Awards 2015.



NOMINATIONS are now welcome for the 2015 Kent Life and Kent on Sunday Food & Drink Awards. The awards dinner will take place at Ashford International Hotel on October 15, 2015 from 6.30pm to midnight.

The prestigious awards, which launched in 2013, are designed to champion, highlight and offer a showcase to the great and the good of the region's food and drink industry, including local producers and suppliers, small farming businesses, chefs, restaurants, pubs and hoteliers.

All will be people who care about the countryside and the future of our local environment.

The companies included will all be nominated by you, our wonderful Kent Life and Kent on Sunday readers. We want to know if you've received a fantastic meal at your local pub or have been impressed by the produce and service at your neighbourhood farmers' market or farm shop.

The nomination form is available here and will be repeated. It is also

available to complete online at: [kentfda.co.uk](http://kentfda.co.uk), where you can read more about the awards and see pictures of last year's winners.

Entries close on July 31 2015. Our handpicked panel of high-profile judges who all live or work in Kent will then select a shortlist, kickstarting the independent judging process where finalists will be visited or interviewed to determine a worthy winner in each category.

All finalists will be invited to the prestigious awards ceremony, where they will enjoy a reception and three-course meal with wine before finding out if they are a winner.

This is our third Kent Life and Kent on Sunday Food & Drink Awards and we are immensely proud to be able to offer you once again the opportunity to reward and recognise the deserving businesses within our local food and drink industry that go above and beyond expectations.

These awards are what you make of them so if you are the owner of a restaurant, a chef or local producer then spread the word among your

clients, customers and visitors.

It takes no time at all to make your nomination. You can email, post or nominate online. The judging panel are looking for quality over quantity, focusing on good comments rather than simply the number of nominations received, so everybody is in with a chance no matter how big or small their business.

**■ Don't forget to let us know when you have made your recommendation on our Twitter page @kentlife and @KOSMedia by using #kentfda – similarly, if you are looking for nominations, please use this hashtag.**



Kent Life and Kent on Sunday Food & Drink Awards 2015 Nomination Form

Nominate your Kent food and drink favourites by using this form or email us at [kentfda@archant.co.uk](mailto:kentfda@archant.co.uk)

Please post your entry form to: Food & Drink Awards 2015, Archant Kent, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PJ

Or you can email us at: [kentfda@archant.co.uk](mailto:kentfda@archant.co.uk)

Copies of the form and posters to advertise your entry are available \_\_\_at [www.kent-life.co.uk](http://www.kent-life.co.uk) and at [www.kentnews.co.uk](http://www.kentnews.co.uk).

The closing date for entries is Friday July 31, 2015

Name. \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

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By entering your details you will be automatically added to the Archant database, Archant will contact you with relevant offers and you can unsubscribe from this at any time. If you would prefer not to be contacted, please state 'no offers' on this form.



■ Our 2014 Kent Food and Drink Hero, Amanda Cottrell. Who will be your choice of Hero for the 2015 top award?

Newcomer of the Year

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Who? .....

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Where? .....

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Why? .....

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Independent food or drink retailer of the Year

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Who? .....

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Where? .....

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Why? .....

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Tea Shop of the Year

Sponsored by Cookery Studio Kent

Who? .....

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Where? .....

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Why? .....

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Food Producer of the Year

Sponsored by Perrys Chartered Accountants

Who? .....

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Where? .....

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Why? .....

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Drinks Producer of the Year

Sponsored by Motorline Maserati

Who? .....

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Where? .....

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Why? .....

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Farm Shop of the Year

Who? .....

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Where? .....

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Why? .....

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Farmers' Market of the Year

Who? .....

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Where? .....

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Why? .....

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Pub of the Year

Sponsored by Eastwell Manor

Who? .....

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Where? .....

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Why? .....

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Restaurant of the Year

Sponsored by Britelite

Who? .....

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Where? .....

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Why? .....

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Chef of the Year

Sponsored by the Canterbury Auction Galleries

Who? .....

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Where? .....

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Why? .....

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Customer Service of the Year

Sponsored by Fenwick Canterbury

Who? .....

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Where? .....

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Why? .....

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Kent Food & Drink Hero of the Year

Who? .....

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Where? .....

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Why? .....

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#### NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR

**Clive Emson** This popular category is open to anyone in the food or drink industry who has started a new venture within the last 18 months. We want to know what impact they have made on the local community and if they have started to achieve any success further afield. Are they helping to promote Kent food and drink to a new audience or have they found a new way to promote an old favourite?

#### ILLUMINATE

#### INDEPENDENT FOOD OR DRINK RETAILER OF THE YEAR

This category celebrates that special food or drink shop that we all treasure. The retailer that includes wonderful local produce in their offering and knows where all their stock comes from to make that special link between field and plate. Our winner will have a special must have range and make a contribution to their local community. Going to their shop will be a treat in itself.



#### TEA SHOP OF THE YEAR

Tea shops are an integral part of the Kent food and drink scene and we'd like to know your favourites. Who makes the best tea, serves the nicest cakes and the freshest scones? Is the jam home made and are the sandwiches freshly cut and liberally filled?

Do they make tea feel like a special event? Most importantly, are most of the ingredients locally sourced? We're looking forward to hearing all about your favourites.

#### FOOD PRODUCER OF THE YEAR

**Perrys** New this year, this category celebrates our local food producers. We are looking for someone who consistently provides both top-quality local produce and service to their customers. We are keen to hear of any innovations, so if they're doing something new, we'd like you to share it with us. If your local baker, grocer or farmer delights, let us know.

#### MASERATI

**DRINK PRODUCER OF THE YEAR** This category celebrates our local drink producers. Whether it's gorgeous Kentish fizz or delicious juice, we want to find the producers who play such a vital role in the county's food and drink economy. We want to know who you think makes the best drink in Kent, alcoholic or not, and why it is so special. We are keen to hear of any innovations, so if they're doing something new, for example, a fabulous new flavour, we'd like to hear about it.

#### FARM SHOP OF THE YEAR

A good farm shop needs to have that extra-special something to tempt shoppers away from their local

supermarket. Are the staff friendly and knowledgeable? Is the range of produce and the layout of an excellent standard? Does your local farm shop offer a box scheme? Is most of the produce sold there grown or raised on that farm, or nearby and if not would the owner be able to tell you where it is from? Nominate your favourite now!

#### FARMERS' MARKET OF THE YEAR

The key to a good Farmers' Market is not only the range of produce and the quality of its stalls but also the principles that it supports - for example, does it work as a co-operative with other farmers? Is most of the produce sold there grown or raised locally? Are the stallholders welcoming and knowledgeable? Is the layout easy to navigate as you move around the market? Are any extras offered on a regular basis, such as cookery demonstrations or talks? Is the Market well advertised so you can plan your visit in advance and is there good accessibility and parking? Let us know so we can tell everyone about the best place to go.

#### PUB OF THE YEAR

**Eastwell Manor** A good pub these days has to offer more than a warm welcome and excellent ale. We are looking for an inn that also offers delicious and locally sourced food with seasonal variations. As well as excellent food and drink, it must offer fantastic friendly customer service and real

value for money. Good pubs are genuinely the hub of their local community. To misquote a popular TV programme, "pubs are all about ambience, ambience, ambience." If you know a great one, even if it isn't your local, let us all know by voting for them.

#### RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR

**BRITELITE** The Kent Life and Kent on Sunday Restaurant of the Year needs to offer an incomparable dining experience, from the ambience to the service and most importantly the food. Are the ingredients locally sourced, do they support local producers and if so, are they recognised on the menu? Look through their wine list, do they have local as well as international wines and fizz and can the staff tell you more if you ask? We'd expect nothing less from the 2014 Restaurant of the Year.

#### CHEF OF THE YEAR



Kent is blessed with outstanding chefs working in the county's fantastic array of restaurants. The Chef of the Year should be someone who has devoted himself or herself to the cause of serving the best possible food. They will demonstrate technical ability, use of seasonal ingredients, presentation of the food and an understanding of how flavours work

together. They will be able to lead and inspire their team and to talk to customers knowledgeably about the dishes they have enjoyed. Above all, we are looking for passion - that magic ingredient that defines true greatness in the kitchen.

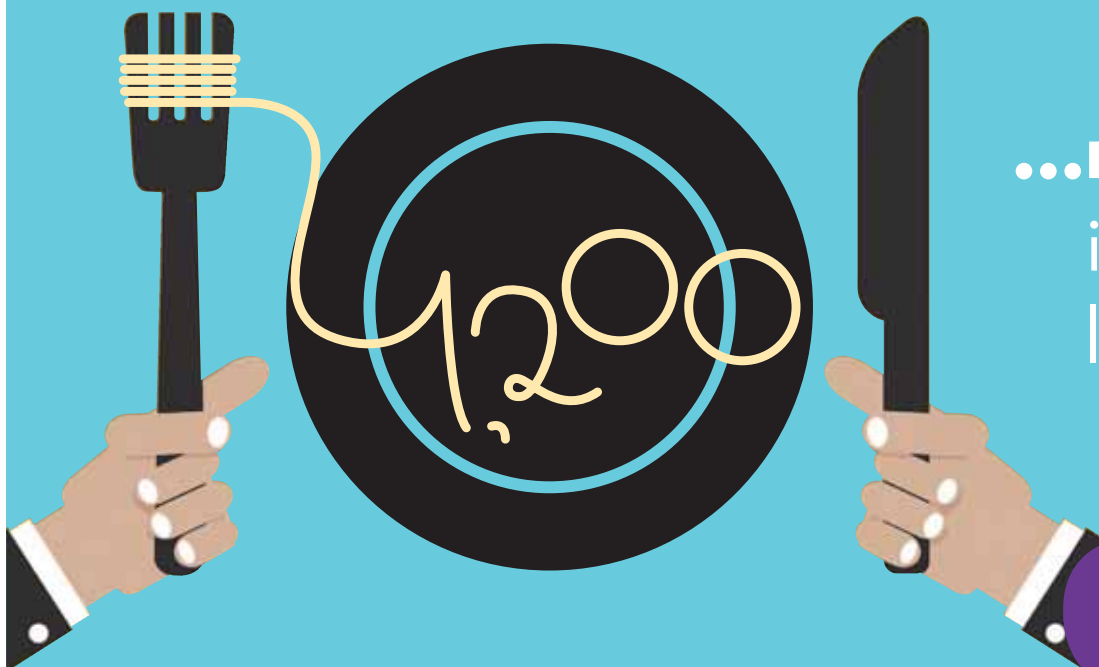
#### Fenwick CANTERBURY

**CUSTOMER SERVICE OF THE YEAR** Another category that's new this year is Customer Service of the Year. Most of our awards recognise customer service in some form. This category celebrates this vital element for its own sake. Do you know an individual, organisation or establishment offering consistently excellent service that goes above and beyond what you expect? We all know great service when we have received it, now is your chance to get it recognised. If you know a person, company, producer, pub, shop or restaurant that is a delight to deal with, tell us.

#### KENT FOOD & DRINK HERO OF THE YEAR

Kent has a food and drink scene that is among the most vibrant in the UK as you would expect from the Garden of England. This category celebrates the individual who has made a positive impact on the food or drink community - someone who goes the extra mile to promote Kent to a wider audience and is passionate about local produce throughout. Now is your chance to nominate your own Kent Food and Drink Hero.

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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

## Reduce billions wasted each day

KOS reported (last week) that further government 'cuts' could lead to the axing of hundreds more front-line police.

Firstly, why are 'cuts' necessary while the hundreds of billions in waste continues and there's some £30 to £40 billion in tax avoidance, that this government has done nothing about?

The waste of hundreds of billions is a national scandal which is kept from the public by all the politicians and there also seems to be a conspiracy of silence in the Press.

Secondly, the police commissioner's office costs almost £1.3m for no apparent extra benefit, which must be worth a few more essential police on the beat.

The fact we could afford so much more in the sixties, highlights the modern disease of the shift of money from basic 'core' services, to those that feed off of them, leaving the core services struggling.

Plus the waste, gold-plated pensions and the sense of entitlement among those in control paying themselves massive wages, 'golden hellos', 'golden goodbyes' and other high rewards for failure.

**Phil Granger,**  
West Malling

## MP's conflicting views on cuts

I READ with interest the article on police cuts (KoS, last week), and the answer by MP Damian Green that it doesn't matter what cuts are made as long as it doesn't affect Westminster.

If Mr Green is so keen on cuts, I would like him to ask his boss David Cameron to sack 650 out of the 850-plus in the House of Lords.

We don't need all these people. He can also stop the subsidised alcohol and food – that would save our country a fortune.

MPs and Lords are paid very good salaries so they can pay as I do.

This is also the same Damian Green standing in Tesco at King'snorth, in Ashford, thanking people for their donation of food to the food banks, which this government caused.

The sooner this Tory government is out of office, the better.

**R Dryland,**  
Ashford

## We must protect our wildlife

I WAS born in Frindsbury in 1955. While growing up, there used to be a lot of farmland on Brompton Farm Road and Wainscott with loads of apple, pear and plum orchards, plus soft fruits and vegetables. Now most of the land is under concrete.

I think it is a terrible shame to destroy all that farmland. Also, they built that road to the Medway Tunnel, right through the heart of farmland.

## LETTER OF THE WEEK



## Eurovision voting is politically driven

YOUR contributor, Dr Paul Jordan (KoS, last week) is not correct when he states that, before 1999, the UK, Ireland and Malta were the only countries allowed to perform in English, in the Eurovision Song Contest.

If he were, Abba would not have been able to perform Waterloo in English, in 1974.

In fact, from the first contest in 1956, until 1965, there was no restriction on the language in which any country chose to sing its entry.

There was then a change of rules for the period 1966 to 1972, but this was altered again to 'no language restriction' from 1973 to 1976.

The restriction rule was reintroduced in 1977, but was not imposed until 1978, because several countries had already chosen their entries in English for the 1977 contest. The restriction then lasted until 1998, when it was finally lifted for the 1999 contest, and there has been no language restriction ever since.

As for his assertion that there is no political bias in the voting – get real!

If there is no bias in the way countries vote for each other, how come Graham Norton (and Terry Wogan before him) can correctly predict, almost 100 per cent of the time, to which nations certain other countries will award their highest votes?

Ever since the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, in both of which the UK chose to align itself to the USA (a country which the majority of eastern European countries in particular apparently detest) our record in Eurovision has gone down and down and down, and the competition has become so highly 'politicised' that there is a likelihood the UK might never win it again.

In my view, if we come last or anywhere near it this year, the UK should withdraw from the competition, along with our financial contribution to the contest, and let the 'clique of countries' that have turned the voting into a farce, take it in turns to choose the winner.

**Christopher Hudson-Gool**  
Maidstone

## EU draining away our cash

THREE things you might not know about the EU and one you might.

For the last 20 years, the European Court of Auditors have not signed off the EU accounts due to 'miss-spending'.

Last year, they said that £5.5 billion was 'miss-spent' due to controls that were only 'partially effective' and £109 billion was 'affected by material error'. Yet they expect Britain to stump-up another £1.7bn.

Along with seven other countries, Turkey is applying to join the EU despite only three per cent of the country being in Europe and 97 per cent in Asia.

In 2013, the EU paid Turkey 903 million euros as a "transition allowance", for "institution building" etc along with a further 574 million euros to the other seven countries. This is even before they are members.

Some 43 per cent of England's fishing quota is held by foreign businesses. One Dutch trawler alone holds six per cent.

Here is the one you might know: We pay to be a member of the EU but nobody knows exactly how much.

It is anything between £23 million and £45 million each day. Why the difference, because even the official figures are contradictory!

**Brian Lofts**  
Ashford

## Libraries will be cut yet again

JOHN Humphrey is "not sure that cuts will result from hiving off libraries" (KoS, letters, March 8).

Well, perhaps he hasn't been paying attention to the history of privatisation of public services – we end up paying as much, or more, for a worse service as core money gets diverted into other purposes.

In the case of Kent's libraries, the proposed trust will not be cost-free as KCC's consultation document implies. Indeed, the suggested business rate reduction will soon be eaten up by the costs of establishing and running the new organisation – including the boss' salary, premises, as well as legal, managerial and fund-raising departments.

Then the trust will want to rebrand every library and market itself.

Meanwhile it will lose the economies of scale, interdepartmental collaboration and links to schools all currently available to KCC.

Of course, a further slice will come off the library budget to pay for council staff to set and monitor targets for the trust and ensure compliance to its service-level agreement.

As Mr Humphrey said, the council is proposing some further cuts for libraries, whether or not the trust option is chosen.

But a trust will find it very hard to replicate the county-wide "efficient and cost-effective library service with high customer satisfaction" that KCC, rightly, says it has achieved.

When it can't – and the new costs identified above kick-in – closures of smaller libraries, cuts to the mobile and other specialist services currently available, and further reductions of qualified library staff, will all become more likely.

The reality is likely to be 'double cuts' from the trust option. And that's before councillors start to view the library service as easier-to-cut once they have washed their hands of direct responsibility by giving away our libraries to a trust.

Currently, Kent can be proud of its library service and there are many ways in which this network of 99 libraries could develop as community hubs under continuing council leadership.

Until April 8, readers can help ensure there is a full debate about the way forward by signing the 'save our public libraries' petition at <http://tinyurl.com/kentlibs>

**Richard Stainton,**  
Whitstable

## A way to get our roads cleared

I AGREE that the litter on road verges is getting out of control (KoS, last week).

This sounds an ideal project for people on community service, and would be much appreciated by us all. Perhaps then the £40 per bag cost detailed by the Highway Agency would be reduced, and people on community service would feel a sense of satisfaction.

**Freda Denyer,**  
Hythe





## Dover Eastern Docks

by **Arthur Devlin, Whitfield**

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**CITY SLICKER:**  
Citigo is small outside,  
big inside



**MAINSTAY MODEL:** Octavia comes in hatchback or estate format

## Jokers need new material

Skoda – the ambitious VW-owned Czech brand deserves respect rather than ridicule for the modernity and desirability of its expanded line-up...

**S**KODA has come a long way from those tired old jokes during the Czech brand's Iron Curtain era.

Since takeover by VW in the 1990s, it has modernised and expanded, and is poised to break into the list of top 10 selling brands in the UK, having added nearly 22 per cent to its market share last year – anyone still telling old Skoda gags really needs new material.

And this growth is based less on Skoda's traditional position as a value option and more on the design and desirability of its modern-day models – some of the newest on the market.

The charge is currently led by the Fabia super-mini (from £9,595), launched this year, but the pace will be picked up by the all-new Superb – Skoda's family model cum luxury flagship – arriving in September, though order books open before then with prices from £18,640.

The new Superb looks elegant, while retaining much clever packaging from the previous car, even if the innovative combined hatch/boot rear lid has been replaced by a conventional hatchback tailgate, presumably as part of a 75-kilo weight-saving over its predecessor.

And the boot is 30 litres larger than before; 625 litres, expanding to a huge 1,760 litres with the rear seats folded.

**SUPERB SKODA:** all-new  
flagship arriving soon



Those needing even more space can opt for the estate model.

But the mainstay of the Skoda range is the Octavia (from £16,310) which still cleverly straddles the family hatchback and bigger family car sectors, while managing to look great value as either hatchback or estate and available in front

and all-wheel drive formats – there's even a rugged Scout version with 4x4, raised suspension and underbody protection for limited off-roading.

Would-be city car buyers though would be wise to check out the value and space of the three or five-door Citigo (from £8,210).



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**#At the end of the agreement there are three options: i) retain the vehicle: pay the optional final payment to own the vehicle; ii) return the vehicle; or iii) replace: part-exchange the vehicle, subject to status.** \*Available when purchased on Solutions Personal Contract Plan from ŠKODA Finance on selected new Rapid Spaceback S 1.2 TSI based on a 36-month, 30,000-mile agreement with deposits from 0–30% subject to underwriting; a lower deposit will result in increased monthly payments. Retail sales only. Excess mileage charges of 4.4p per mile apply. Available to 18s and over. Offer available for vehicles ordered by 31st March 2015 and delivered by 30th June 2015 from participating retailers. Further charges may be payable if vehicle is returned. Offers are not available in conjunction with any other offer and may be varied or withdrawn at any time. †£2,500 minimum part-exchange available providing you have a 1-month valid MOT and have been the registered owner of the part-exchange vehicle for a minimum of 3 months. <sup>^</sup>Up to 3 years/10,000 miles per annum (whichever comes first) when purchased on Solutions Personal Contract Plan. Subject to availability. Terms and conditions apply. Finance subject to status. Accurate at time of print. Freepost ŠKODA Finance.

Official fuel consumption in mpg (litres/100km) for the ŠKODA Rapid Spaceback range: Urban 38.2 (7.4) to 62.8 (4.5); Extra Urban 58.9 (4.8) to 83.1 (3.4); Combined 48.7 (5.8) to 74.3 (3.8). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for the new Rapid Spaceback 134 to 99g/km. Standard EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.



# Suzuki takes-off with some Swift appeal

Japanese marque's range has benefitted across the board from two generations of its remarkably rejuvenated supermini contender, writes **Steve Loader**...

**S**UZUKI'S Swift used to bug me – it was not swift in any way, shape or form. But my curmudgeonly nit-picking attitude changed with the previous generation model. It resembled the BMW MINI for looks and fun, but was far more affordable, fuelling a surge in popularity for the whole Suzuki motor brand.

Using admirable 'don't fix if it ain't broke' thinking, the Japanese marque then morphed that version into the slightly bigger current 2012 generation car, while boosting quality, fit and finish.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the excellent Swift Sport, the range flagship at £14,499 and nigh on unbeatable in its price class.

It comes with supportive sports seats, a well-arranged and durable dashboard, all the Bluetooth/MP3 'toys connectivity' required of a youth-orientated hatch, plus perforated leather sports wheel with audio and cruise controls.

But is the Swift Sport exclusively a young person's car? I would argue that its appeal actually spans generations, much like the MINI. Anyway, it's not an out and out



hot hatch: the free-revving 136PS (135bhp) 1.6-litre petrol engine needs nearly nine seconds to hit 62mph, but that qualifies it as a warm hatch rather than a scorcher, with consequent insurance savings. With a crisp six-speed gearbox, you can also make the most of the

car's sporty elan as well as cruise the motorway economically and with a rather more relaxed engine note. For best economy though, seek out the bigger selling 1.2-litre petrol versions capable of at least 56.5mpg on the official combined cycle versus the Sport's 44.1. There's also a dearer



1.2 Dualjet petrol version (from £12,699) offering 65.7. Pin sharp steering also comes into play, plus the Sport's ride quality and refinement, despite the fact that this version has a chassis honed for sportier driving. That's particularly impressive,

**Suzuki Swift Sport**  
Price: **from £14,499**  
Driving appeal: ★★★★★  
Image: ★★★★★  
Space: ★★★★★  
Value: ★★★★★  
Running costs: ★★★★★  
How green?: ★★★  
Best rival: **Ford Fiesta**

because I've criticised some hot hatches for the baggage they bring in terms of poor economy, discomfort and noise for the 90 per cent of traffic conditions we endure on 'modern' roads, just for the sake of those increasingly elusive odd moments when you can cut loose a bit. The Sport is a cracking little all-rounder and, since 2013, available in both three and five-door forms. There are some nice luxury touches too like keyless ignition and a push button starter, though I would love to see a stripped out, more affordable Sport too. On the practical front, the Swift cabin and boot are not at the top of the rankings, but it's not the biggest car on the outside either, so the space efficiency is good. It's also fair to say that while it is a five-seater, passenger No5 won't want to spend too much time in the back.

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Fuel consumption figures for the Fiat Panda Pop 1.2 in mpg (l/100km): Urban 42.2 (6.7); Extra Urban 65.7 (4.3); Combined 54.3 (5.2). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 120 g/km. Fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures based on standard EU tests for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. \*Fiat Panda Pop 1.2 5dr Customer saving is included in offer price of £7,645 and represents a discount of £1,450 off the On the Road Price of £9,095. On the Road Price refers to the price as shown in the current Fiat price list. Promotion available on new Panda Pop 1.2 models registered by 31st March 2015. Fiat Deposit Contribution only available in conjunction with Fiat i-Deal PCP. With Fiat i-Deal you have the option to return the vehicle and not pay the final payment, subject to the vehicle not having exceeded an agreed annual mileage (a charge of 6p per mile for exceeding 6,000 miles per annum in this example) and being in good condition. Finance subject to status. Guarantees may be required. Terms and Conditions apply. At participating Dealers only. Fiat Financial Services, PO BOX 4465, Slough, SL1 0RW. We work with a number of creditors including Fiat Financial Services.



# Main Dealer SERVICING

## Buyers love their dealer 'history'

**C**ARS are usually our second biggest investment after putting a roof over our heads.

So it's vital we protect that considerable outlay by maintaining the service schedule and having repairs done promptly and competently.

The traditional guarantee was a full main dealer service history (FMDSH), a reassuring record that everything required for the manufacturer's warranty had been carried out.

But this became seen as a restrictive practice, prompting EU legislation in 2002 stopping manufacturers insisting their cars were maintained by franchise networks to keep the guarantee intact.

It also meant that manufacturers had to make vehicle diagnostics informa-



**KEEP UP THE HISTORY:** you should get a better part exchange from your dealer – in this case a Hyundai franchise, below, worth protecting Skoda's sporty Octavia vRS

tion – crucial with increasingly sophisticated vehicles – specialist tools and updates available to independ-

ent garages and servicing centres.

Nevertheless, many car buyers still believe main dealer servicing is best for maintaining reliability and the secondhand value of the car – used car buyers will usually pay a premium for a FMDSH, particularly on sophisticated models.

Sceptics argue this perceived premium is wiped out by paying higher main dealer service costs, but manufacturers and their franchised networks have raised their game since the 2002 legislation.

Indeed, with car sales and profits squeezed during the economic downturn, dealers have chosen to

be more competitive on servicing, service plans and ancillaries like tyres and exhausts – normally the preserve of quick-fit centres.

They also bank on the perception that only main dealers' service technicians can know a brand's cars as well they do, while 'all makes' centres must spread expertise thinly across many makes and models.

And dealers know that happy service customers keep coming back, each time seeing the latest new cars beckoning near the service desk – one day soon, they may buy again.



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# What's an 'FMDSH' and is it worth it?

**U**SED car ads have their own language and some of the most confusing abbreviations for the layman are DSH, MDSH and FMDSH.

They are all variations on the theme 'dealer service history' with FMDSH being the gold standard – full main dealer service history.

Does it matter? Many new car buyers say it does, to protect future part exchange or secondhand values of their cherished motor, since used car buyers will pay a premium for a complete and unblemished main dealer service history.

Cynics might argue: "Ah, but you wiped out that perceived premium by paying more for your main dealer servicing while you owned the car."

But third party sources also support the wisdom of keeping your new car in the franchise family.

Media motoring guru Honest John really was honest with a BMW owner who considered using an independent garage to maintain his car:

"After independent servicing, you will get a lower part-ex price from a BMW dealer and it will go to auction. If the car has a full dealer service history and is in retail condition, you will get a higher price. The difference will normally be worth more than you save on maintenance."



Motor Trade Insider website polled several professional motor traders who collectively buy 5,000 cars per year for main dealers. The simple question was:

"If you were asked to bid on a three-year old variant of one of your models with average mileage and spec would you value it any less if it had three KwikFit/Halfords/Tesco etc stamps against three stamps

from the franchise representing by the car?

"The results in some cases were staggering: the Ford and VW buyers said they would value a car like this between £800-1,000 less. The Jaguar buyer said it would need to be £1,500 to £2,000 less and, amazingly, the BMW and Mercedes boys said they probably just wouldn't want to buy it!"



**CHERISH THEM WITH A 'FMDSH':**  
Hyundai's stylish new i20 supermini and the rugged Outdoor version of the Skoda Yeti



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\*All prices correct at the time of publication and may be subject to change at any point without notice. MOT excludes NI and Class 7. Offer ends 31 March 2015.



# Servicing on a fixed budget

**Y**OU really don't want a shock when you are handed the bill after the next service on the car, especially in these tough economic times.

So it's hardly surprising that many people are turning to dealers offering fixed price service menus and plans, to control and smooth out the motoring budget.

The idea took off first

with premium brands whose service costs were perceived as pricey, and capitalised on an owner's natural reluctance to jeopardise the car's future value by servicing outside the dealer network.

More mainstream brands have adopted the same tactic though, to counter ambitious independent and quick-fit operators, only too happy to siphon off the steady churn of servicing work.

Service plans can also be quite flexible – some are even free. In-



Initially, they were launched to cover the car's warranty period – transferable in the event of the car's sale – or on an annual basis, but many brands have followed up with one-off deals or monthly instalment options, recognising that many drivers like to break down their motoring budget into more manageable chunks of money.

Best advice is to ask your main dealer about the menu of fees and schemes available and get advice on the pros and cons of each one.

The blurb for such schemes uses the word 'policy' a lot, for that is virtually what they are: insurance policies for servicing and the vehicle warranty – a cost-effective, but necessary part of the month-by-month/annual cost of running a car.

**CAN YOU FIX IT?:** See if there's a service plan available for your new car, such as Alfa Romeo's rakish MiTo supermini or the Renault Captur crossover



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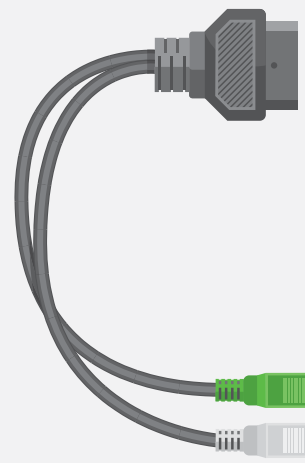
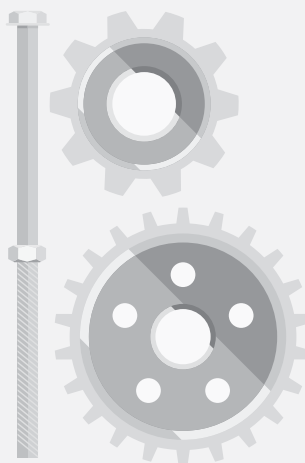
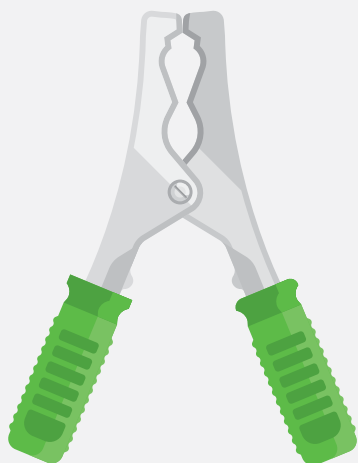
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Swale Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check

Contact Details Tel: 01795 477475 - Fax: 01795 479461 - Email [swa@westlands.kent.sch.uk](mailto:swa@westlands.kent.sch.uk)

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The successful candidates will be required to apply for the enhanced DBS check and subscribe to the updating service.

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Valence is looking for committed individuals that want to make a difference by being responsible for enabling students to learn, promoting their independence and helping them achieve. Working in the classroom and residential setting the role involves supporting students' communication, providing physical management and personal care. Children's Workforce Diploma at Level 3 is desirable otherwise support is given to complete this.

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Set shifts are 7.30pm-7.30am or 8pm-8am and 9pm-9am on the 16 Open Weekends

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The post involves working waking nights and supporting students with their personal care needs during the night. Nights available may change. Open weekends are during term time in which the school is open to give respite to families. Successful applicants will be expected to complete the Level 3 Children's Workforce Diploma.

Valence School is a KCC Foundation residential and day Special School. We cater for children and young people with physical disabilities, complex medical needs and associated learning and communication difficulties from age 4 to 19.

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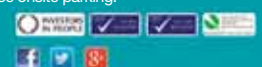
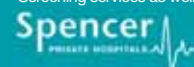
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## LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

### HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 – SECTION 116

#### STOPPING UP OF LAND AT MACDONALD COURT PADDOCK WOOD

I AM GIVING NOTICE THAT The Kent County Council as Highway Authority for the County of Kent propose to make an application to the Magistrates' sitting at Maidstone Magistrates' Court on 30 April 2015 at 14:00 for an Order under Section 116 of the Highways Act 1980 to extinguish highway rights on the grounds that they are unnecessary on land at Macdonald Court Paddock Wood as edged red on the plan on deposit.

A copy of the draft order and the plan referred to are on deposit, and can be seen during normal office hours, at the main reception of The Kent County Council at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ.

Any person to whom this Notice has been given or who uses the highway specified or who would be aggrieved by the making of the Order may appear before the Magistrates' Court to raise an objection or make a representation on the application. Any person intending to appear before the Magistrates' Court at the hearing of the application is requested to inform Joy Ukadike by post to Legal Services, The Kent County Council, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ, by email [joy.ukadike@kent.gov.uk](mailto:joy.ukadike@kent.gov.uk), or by telephone 03000 416791 before 20 April 2015 quoting reference number LS/21/106595/657.

If you require further information or would like to discuss this matter, please contact Joy Ukadike using the contact details shown above.

JOHN BURR

DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Traffic Schemes & Member Highway Fund

Ashford Highway Depot  
Henwood Industrial Estate  
Javelin Way  
Ashford  
Kent  
TN24 8AD



### HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 – SECTION 116

#### STOPPING UP OF LAND AT NORTH ROAD, SHORNCLEFFE CAMP, FOLKESTONE

I AM GIVING NOTICE THAT The Kent County Council as Highway Authority for the County of Kent propose to make an application to the Magistrates' sitting at Canterbury Magistrates' Court on 5 May 2015 at 10:00 for an Order under Section 116 of the Highways Act 1980 to extinguish highway rights on the grounds that they are unnecessary on land at North Road, Shorncliffe Camp, Folkestone as shown on the red line plan on deposit.

A copy of the draft order and the plan referred to are on deposit, and can be seen during normal office hours, at the main reception of The Kent County Council at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ.

Any person to whom this Notice has been given or who uses the highway specified or who would be aggrieved by the making of the Order may appear before the Magistrates' Court to raise an objection or make a representation on the application. Any person intending to appear before the Magistrates' Court at the hearing of the application is requested to inform Joy Ukadike by post to Legal Services, The Kent County Council, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ, by email [joy.ukadike@kent.gov.uk](mailto:joy.ukadike@kent.gov.uk), or by telephone 03000 416791 before 25 April 2015 quoting reference number LS/21/106056/657.

If you require further information or would like to discuss this matter, please contact Joy Ukadike using the contact details shown above.

JOHN BURR

DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Traffic Schemes & Member Highway Fund

Ashford Highway Depot  
Henwood Industrial Estate  
Javelin Way  
Ashford  
Kent  
TN24 8AD



### KENT COUNTY COUNCIL PUBLIC NOTICE

A building certified for worship named The Cup of Hope and Truth Foundation, Church and Quiet Room only, Sanctuary and Healing Centre, Becketts Road, Fairfield, Brookland, Romney Marsh in the registration district of Kent, in the Non-Metropolitan County of Kent, was on 22nd January 2015 registered for solemnising marriages therein pursuant to section 41 of the Marriage Act 1949 as amended by Section 1 (1) of the Marriage Acts Amendment Act, 1958.

Superintendent Registrar  
5 March 2015

### KENT COUNTY COUNCIL PUBLIC NOTICE

A building certified for worship named Christ Apostolic Church, Solution Centre, 47-49 High Street, Swanscombe, Kent in the registration district of Kent, in the Non-Metropolitan County of Kent, was on 18th February 2015 registered for solemnising marriages therein pursuant to section 41 of the Marriage Act 1949 as amended by Section 1 (1) of the Marriage Acts Amendment Act, 1958.

Superintendent Registrar  
5 March 2015

FIND  
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### KENT COUNTY COUNCIL PUBLIC NOTICE

A building certified for worship named Eastgate, North Kent Community Church, 141 Springfield Parkway, Northfleet in the registration district of Kent, in the Non-Metropolitan County of Kent, was on 13th February 2015 registered for solemnising marriages therein pursuant to section 41 of the Marriage Act 1949 as amended by Section 1 (1) of the Marriage Acts Amendment Act, 1958.

Superintendent Registrar  
5 March 2015

## PLANNING



### MARINE AND COASTAL ACCESS ACT 2009 BOTTOM TOWED FISHING GEAR (PROHIBITED AREAS) BYELAW

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: The Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority intends to apply to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for confirmation of a Bottom Towed Fishing Gear (Prohibited Areas) Byelaw to prohibit the use of bottom towed fishing gear in specified areas to protect the designated features of those areas and therefore prevent damage to or deterioration of the sites

During the period of 28 days from the date of the publication of this Notice a copy of the Byelaw and Impact Assessment will be deposited at the offices of the applicant, at the address given below and at [www.kentandsex-iffca.gov.uk](http://www.kentandsex-iffca.gov.uk).

Objections or representations concerning this notification should be made within 28 days of the date of this notice to both addresses given below:

Marine Conservation and Enforcement Team	Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
Marine Management Organisation	Paragon House
Lancaster House	Albert Street
Hampshire Court	Ramsgate
Newcastle upon Tyne	Kent
NE4 7YH	CT11 9HD
or <a href="mailto:iffcabylaws@marinemangement.org.uk">iffcabylaws@marinemangement.org.uk</a>	or <a href="mailto:info@kentandsex-iffca.gov.uk">info@kentandsex-iffca.gov.uk</a>

## PLANNING



### THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2010

The following applications have been submitted for consideration by the Council:

**Y15/0203/SH** - 59 & 61 High Street New Romney Kent TN28 8AH - Continued use of first floor as offices (Class B1) and installation of two windows and one door to the ground floor rear elevation.

**Y15/0204/SH** - White Gates House Oak Hill Acrise Folkestone Kent - Erection of a greenhouse.

**Y15/0219/SH** - Oak Ryse Forge Hill Acrise Folkestone Kent - Erection of a replacement single storey rear extension.

**Y15/0220/SH** - Oak Ryse Forge Hill Acrise Folkestone Kent - Listed building consent for the erection of a replacement single storey rear extension.

**Y15/0229/SH** - 122 Sandgate High Street Sandgate Kent CT20 3BZ - 2 metre overall crown reduction, crown clean and removal of low epicormic growth of one Ash tree situated within a conservation area.

**Y15/0164/SH** - Land bounded by Cockreed Lane and Rolfe Lane (also known as land opposite Dorland) Cockreed Lane New Romney Kent - Outline application for development of up to 110 dwellings with supporting infrastructure.

**Y15/0129/SH** - 2 Old School Cottages Harringe Lane Sellindge Ashford Kent - Erection of a garage and conversion of existing outbuilding and garages to playroom including re-roofing of garages, addition of doors, windows, rooflights, installation of w.c.

**Y15/0202/SH** - The Royal British Legion Park Street Lydd Romney Marsh Kent - Erection of one detached two storey dwelling with detached garage and associated parking, erection of two semi-detached two storey dwellings with rooms in the roof space, each with associated parking and single detached garages, following the demolition of existing clubhouse and outbuildings (amended scheme to that approved under planning permission Y14/0788/SH.)

**Y15/0225/SH** - Elham Church Of England Primary School Vicarage Lane Elham Canterbury Kent - Works to trees situated within a conservation area comprising the reduction in height to approximately 3 metres of a row of approximately 15 trees of various species such as Ash, Field Maple and Lime.

**Y15/0226/SH** - Windlass Cottage Cullings Hill Elham Canterbury Kent - Crown reduction of a Beech tree situated within a conservation area comprising the reduction in height by 3 metres and the reduction of laterals by 2 metres

**Y15/0151/SH** - 3 Bargrove Farm Bargrove Newington Folkestone Kent - Erection of a rear orangery.

**Y15/0223/SH** - Communications Mast Split Lane Stelling Minnis Kent - Installation of 3 No. 600mm diameter dishes on the existing telecommunications column, along with the replacement of 1 equipment cabinet and addition of 1 cabinet at ground level (telecommunication development 56 day notification).

Representations can be made in writing either on line on the Council's website, by email to [planning@shepway.gov.uk](mailto:planning@shepway.gov.uk) or in writing to the Head of Planning and Environmental Health, Shepway District Council, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2QY. Please always quote the application reference number. Comments should be made in writing within 21 days from the date of publication. Please note that any representations received will be publically viewable on the Council's website.

The applications marked (\*) do not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated.

Note: This is not a full list of applications received. All planning applications can be viewed and comments made online at <http://searchplanapps.shepway.gov.uk/online-applications/>.

C Lewis, Head of Planning and Environmental Health  
Shepway District Council

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# No quick fixes for Kent cricket club

Emphasis on long-term solutions not new or overseas players



**SPITFIRE:** The ground could be a cash cow for the club if its get planning permission

## Cricket

By Jamie Weir

Jamie.Weir@archant.co.uk

FINANCES are improving at Kent County Cricket Club, but CEO Jamie Clifford won't be shelling out the cash for any superstar players anytime soon.

Mr Clifford said that the squad was unlikely to be looking overseas for new players, stating that he was happy to have players who were progressing through the Kent academy system to join the first team.

He said: "At the moment, we're pleased with the squad we've got. Fourteen of the 23 players are home-grown, and there are players with international potential there."

According to Mr Clifford, building up the club's own talent would give

better results over the long term, rather than just throwing cash at what he termed 'quick fixes'.

He said: "If you can produce your own players of that status rather than importing them from overseas, then that leaves you in a stronger position, rather than just a quick fix of looking for overseas players."

Kent, said Mr Clifford, wanted to back its players to develop inside the club, creating a sustainable culture.

The CEO made the comments following the club's announcement of its financial results for the year ending October 2014.

The cricket club, said Mr Clifford, had continued to make improvements to its bank balance, revealing a juicy £1.25 million profit for the year.

Although the club won't be spending money on any new star players, it hasn't been skimping on developing its Beckenham ground, which is due to see first-class cricket

return there later this year.

Clifford said: "May 2015 will see a return to Beckenham and it is very pleasing that over the last 18 months a centre of cricketing excellence has been created in this area of strong Kent support through very significant investment."

The club isn't finished looking for fresh development opportunities either, with Mr Clifford saying that a key planning decision later this year could help the club find real financial security going forward.

He said: "An essential element of the plan is securing planning permission for development of the Old Dover Road side of the ground."

"This is something that the club hopes to achieve through the planning appeal process in the coming months."

"A successful outcome would result in greatly improved financial stability for the club."

## Gills' boss says team will keep on 'delivering'

GILLS manager Justin Edinburgh has said that the team will be looking to end the season on a high note, and won't be slacking off even once they're safely away from the relegation zone.

"That certainly won't happen," said Edinburgh.

He continued: "We've got too much to work for. We want to try and accumulate as many points as we can, and certainly better last year's campaign."

The Gills' gaffer said that the team's players would be looking to impress even when they were safe in the table.

He said: "There are players here that are playing for futures. There is obviously the opportunity for people to impress going forward for next season."



**EDINBURGH:** Wants the team to get back to consistent performances

"First and foremost, the fans come expecting, and the players will deliver."

The manager said that despite a disappointing 3-0 loss against Chesterfield – the first of his tenure – the squad would be looking to bounce back and see the season out on a high note.

Edinburgh said: "You can't dwell on defeats, because it doesn't matter what club you're at, you're always going to get them throughout the season."

"As a manager, what you aim for, and what you want, is a reaction, and the right reaction."

"You always have to address defeats, as you do victories, but we know where we went wrong, and we'll look to rectify that."

Whatever happens in the coming games, the Gills manager says he's already looking to next season, saying he wants to 'get a head start.'

## Veteran fencer Jane's bronze medal haul

HERNE Bay fencer Jane Clayton bested many younger opponents at this year's veterans' fencing championships in Gloucester, eventually taking a pair of bronze medals home for the foil and epee events.

Sixty-year-old Jane started the 28-strong foil event as the number four seed. She reached the semi-finals without difficulty before facing two-time former champion Gillian Worman, who she beat at the same stage last year. This time Worman was the winner and Clayton had to be content with bronze.

In the 34-strong epee event, Clayton was second seed after winning all her preliminary fights. She again reached the semi-final, but then met the formidable Georgina Usher.

Usher is reigning champion and 18 years younger at just 42 years old. There was never any doubt about the result with Usher dominating the fight to win 10-2.

Jane collected her second bronze medal, finishing top of her age group.



**CHAMPION:** Jane Clayton picked up double bronze



**TRIUMPHANT:** Some of the team pose with their trophy

## Lydd golfers take east Kent bragging rights

LYDD Golf Club is celebrating one of its biggest victories after a team from the club won the annual East Kent Alliance Marlowe Trophy.

It is the first time the club has won the annual tournament, which sees 108 golfers from 18 clubs across east Kent, compete to take home the trophy.

The win gives the club, which boasts a 6,629 yard championship standard course, bragging rights in the east of the county.

A spokesman for Lydd Golf Club told KoS: "We have exciting plans to

grow and expand our membership at Lydd Golf Club and winning this trophy – which is so hotly contested by so many clubs each year – will certainly help to put us on the golfing map in the region."

The club says the tournament victory is a great achievement, particularly because it is a relatively new club.

The club says it hopes to continue its growth, spearheaded by its head green-keeper Darren Burton and the club's professional John Denham.

## Whites happy with their season

DOVER Athletic's manager Chris Kinnear has said that despite a run of seven losses earlier in the season, he's happy with his squad's performance.

He said: "Let's not get carried away that we lost a few games. At the end of the day we are tenth in the league and the third highest scorers, so we can all be positive."

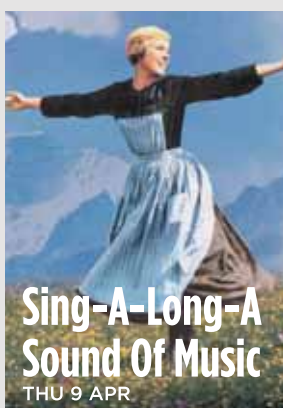
"We are really dangerous going forward and teams have got to be wary of us."

The team are currently battling for a play-off place, something Kinnear says will be a good test for the side.

He said: "We have been showing great progression for the last two years, we are now learning for next year."

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